

Town of Brookfield Conservation Commission

Meeting Agenda – Dec 4, 2019

Commission Members: Bob Nielsen, Frank Frazier, Pat Girard, Rich Zacher (Selectman's Representative)

1. Meeting called to order
2. Public Comments
3. Review of Nov 6, 2019 minutes
4. Mail:

a) Meredith Savings Bank Statement:

Nov 8, 2019 Interest: \$0.17 (0.04%)

Balance: \$5,430.26

5. Old Business

a) Town Preserve



On November 15, Bob Nielsen went up to the Town Preserve and met Brad Williamson to discuss the possibility of putting a gate where the Royale property meets the Town Preserve field. I sent him the detailed plans from NH Fish & Game which mimics the gate at the end of Moose Mountain Road leading up to Mountain Lake. Brad felt he could dig the holes, securely bury the metal posts with “ears” in concrete, and make the gate. We also went over to the old well, about eight feet deep, just to the right of the Hackett foundation. The cover there seemed too small and unsteady, and I photographed it and sent it to Rich Zacher. After Brad left, I cut some brush near the foundation, but I will consult Heritage Commission's Marilou MacLean before I get too close to the foundation. And Brad wanted to cut a downed aspen tree out of the cellar hole, but we need to consult Marilou

on this. Subsequently, the Selectmen put a hold on the gate pending more discussion. Initially I was going to donate my gate, but it is too small. The construction of a new gate runs into money, and that is a decision the Selectmen need to make. In my November 15 email to Rich Zacher, I mentioned the possibility of putting boulders, seasonal at the juncture of the Royale property and the Town Preserve field, in place of gate(s), and this idea is part of the continuing deliberation by the Selectmen.

b) On November 2, Frank Frazier and Bob Nielsen headed to Pembroke Academy for the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC) annual meeting. The following is a brief summary of the three workshops that Bob Nielsen attended.

i. NHDES WETLANDS RULES and CC'S ROLE in the PERMITTING

PROCESS: Sandy Crystall, NH DES Wetland Bureau

Workshop Description

NHDES will have new wetlands rules as of December 15, 2019. the new rules and permitting processes have many significant changes. Sandy will provide information to assist Conservation Commissions in fulfilling their advisory role in the revised wetlands permitting processes. She will draw from her experience, at NHDES, in permitting and outreach, and as a Conservation Commission and Planning Board member.

My summary

New Hampshire Statute 482-A is about filling and dredging in wetlands, both fresh water and salt water. It is found to be for the public good and welfare to protect and preserve these wetlands. The main focus in the new rules apparently is to codify the process. The Conservation Commissions will play roughly the same role as before in their signing off on projects. But, the smaller projects will be more rushed in submitting their permits. I found the information in this workshop overwhelming, so I called Barbara Richter today (Dec 4) for some clarification, and she helped me with some of the information above. The slides used in this presentation can be found at:

<http://www.nhacc.org/files/6215/7315/4412/NHACC-CCs-role-in-permit-process-final.pptx.pdf>

- ii. USING GIS & MAPS to SUPPORT CONSERVATION COMMISSION EFFORTS: Craig Tufts, GIS and Transportation Planner, Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission

Workshop Description

This workshop is intended to give a broad overview of some of the many ways Conservation Commissions can use GIS to further their goals. It is intended to be helpful to those with or without GIS experience. The presenter will welcome expertise in the audience to answer questions and inform conversations. Topics that will be discussed include:

- How to view GIS data and create maps using the Graniteview online tool,
- An overview of readily available GIS datasets commonly of interest to Conservation Commissions,
- An explanation of Natural Resource Inventories (NRI) and co-occurrence mapping exercises and how they can inform Conservation Commissions,
- Using GPS and GIS to map your trail networks, and an overview of the NH Fish and Game Trails Planner,
- Ideas on where to go for professional GIS mapping tools and assistance

My Summary

GIS refers to a Geographic Information System which is a system “designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present spatial or geographic data.” It allows one to layer maps with additional information such as trails, stone walls, forested land, agricultural fields, aquifers, etc. Co-occurrence analysis (data layers) can then be done. One can create a GIS by using, for example, the website:

<http://www.granit.unh.edu>. For me at least, it takes considerable experimenting to create a meaningful GIS, and I have not yet been successful, but there are a few ready-made ones in their library. Even then, the data may not be as up-to-date as one would like.

Fortunately, questions can be addressed to Craig Tufts, the Presenter, at ctufts@cnhrpc.org. A project that would be fun to do

would be to create a map of trails with well-placed photographs regarding the Brookfield Town Preserve. Another project would be to produce a GIS of the Current Use parcels in Brookfield.

The handout associated with this workshop can be found at (use control click):

[http://www.nhacc.org/files/5015/7315/4284/USING GIS MAPS to SUPPORT CONSERVATION COMMISSION Efforts.pdf](http://www.nhacc.org/files/5015/7315/4284/USING_GIS_MAPS_to_SUPPORT_CONSERVATION_COMMISSION Efforts.pdf)

iii) RECYCLING IN NH: IS IT STILL WORTHWHILE?

Reagan Bissonnette, Northeast Recover Association

Workshop Description

Would you like to better understand the current recycling markets in New Hampshire and beyond? Are you interested in learning how to make recycling more financially viable in your community? And what does China have to do with all this? Join Reagan Bissonnette, Executive Director of the Northeast Resource Recovery Association—the nation’s oldest recycling cooperative—for an informative discussion about the current recycling markets. Learn the basics of how recycling markets have changed and what the future holds in NH for recycling, composting, and trash. She will also discuss ways in which Conservation Commissions can support recycling and waste reduction efforts in their communities.

My Summary

I found this workshop to be the most interesting, perhaps because Brookfield shares services at considerable cost with Wakefield. The Northeast Resource Recovery Association (Epsom, NH) is a nonprofit which helps small and large communities manage their own recycling programs. They negotiate competitive pricing from companies who purchase recyclables and help members sell those recyclables to those companies. The municipal annual dues are 0.07 cents per capita (minimum dues \$100, maximum dues \$1,800). The 2010 Census said Brookfield had a population of 712 people. Membership currently includes over 400 New England municipalities, individuals, and business. Approximately 65% of the membership is from New Hampshire. There is financial value of recycling over disposal. The

types of recyclables include fiber, glass, residue, plastic, and metal. Commodities separated into distinct subcategories command a higher price at market than the subcategories being mixed together. Grants are available through New Hampshire the Beautiful, a beverage industry group, to purchase equipment and storage for recyclables.

The Association's website for composting is [https://nrra.net/wp-content/uploads/HB 617 Composting Remarks Handouts FINAL 09262019.pdf](https://nrra.net/wp-content/uploads/HB_617_Composting_Remarks_Handouts_FINAL_09262019.pdf)

The Report of the Committee to Study Recycling Streams and Solid Waste Management in New Hampshire (HB 617, 1Nov2019). One of the comments from this report that stood out in my mind was in the Introduction. "To say that the subject of solid waste is vast and complex is an understatement."

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/statstudcomm/committees/1476/reports/2019%20Final%20Report.pdf>

The Association website is <https://nrra.net/>.

My feeling is that it would be worth a call to NRRRA (603-736-4401) or to go down to Epsom for a visit. What about engine oil, paint, etc? What has Brookfield done to look for alternatives to the shared services with Wakefield? On the Selectmen's page on the Town website, it is interesting to look at the two contracts with Wakefield regarding our shared services (Wakefield Refuse Agreement and Wakefield Municipal Services Agreement). In addition, the Services Review Committee Report-2017.

- c) The following is a summary by Frank Frazier of the three workshops he attended.

The 2019 NHACC Annual Meeting on 11/2/19 at Pembroke Academy was the first one I have attended and I found it very rewarding. It is great to hear what is going on with other Conservation Commissions around the state as well as to be kept up to date with the latest legislative trends around conservation.

In the general session my biggest takeaway was the information that there

are efforts before the NH House and Senate to "take a look" at the Current Use laws with an eye to not just water them down but to possibly eliminate Current Use altogether. The general argument appears to be that Current Use allows large property owners to "hold on" to their land and that somehow is the reason we don't have Affordable Housing in the state. Personally, I think that is false thinking. If Current Use was abolished and these parcels, especially in the southern part of the state, came on the market Affordable Housing would not be what they would be used for.

The first session I attended (DES Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act Updates) was the key one for me all day. It was a one-hour in-depth review of the Shore Lands Protection Act and exactly what it covers. This also included a brief history of how it has been "watered down" over the last 10 years by amendments to it. The final 30 minutes covered important rule changes for it that go into effect this month. The biggest one is the change to how to calculate the allowable square footage of "Accessory Structures" that can be allowed in the first 50' from the water's edge. It is going to be greatly increased however it must now also include any beaches (they were not included in the old formula). These uses include paths, patios, decks, etc. Overall it was very informative. It is my hope that Brookfield's Selectmen, Code Enforcement Officer, and Planning Board keep abreast of these changes.

The second session (NE Landscape Futures Explorer: A Tool to Envision and Plan for Resilience) was a presentation by a group from Harvard on a new visualization software program that allows you to project various "scenarios" for growth in the state, county, or down to the town level using data gathered from a great many regional, state, and federal agencies. You can project out 50 years in the future. It was an interesting tool but I did not see its immediate value to Brookfield other than it confirms we are going to see growth coming at us from the south up the route 16 corridor.

The third session (What's Our Water Worth) was I thought going to be on water extraction (wells for bottled water). Instead it was put on by the NH Lakes association and specifically focused on the value of lake front

property and how, if a town has a lake or two in it, that contributes to the whole town due to the increased tax revenue for lake front properties. It was basically a discussion on how valuable to the town these properties are and that a town should be vigilant in protecting them, making sure the Shore Lands Protection Act, is vigorously enforced, etc.

Overall it was a great conference. I plan to attend next year.

- i) Update from Frank in his role as Conservation Commission liaison to the Planning Board with respect to the inclusion of the CC Natural Resources Index (NRI) in helping to mold the Master Plan.
- j) On November 7, Frank Frazier and Bob Nielsen traveled to New Durham Elementary School for the MMRG Seven-Town Mixer for Conservation Commissioners. The topic for the evening was "Town Forests & Community Forests". Barbara Richter, Executive Director of NHACC spoke about Town Forests. Charlie Bridges, Chairman of the Birch Ridge Community Forest Steering Committee, spoke about Community Forests. A Town Forest is authorized by New Hampshire law, established by town vote, and managed by a Town Forest Committee of citizens appointed by the town's Select Board (I noticed this is gender neutral and wondered if Brookfield should use this). A Community Forest is a forest made possible by a grant from the Community Forest Program of the US Forest Service. One thought that Frank had was that if we ever wanted to increase the acreage of the Brookfield Town Preserve, we might seek grant money from the Community Forest Program. It was an interesting evening, as always. The gathering made the front page of the 21November2019 Carroll County Independent and the photo used included the two of us along with the other commissioners.



6. New Business

- a) In the November, 2019 NHACC e-News which I have forwarded to you, there is an interesting section on Current Use and Current Use Taxation which was declared in the public interest under RSA 79-A. There is even a fascinating podcast one can listen to which lasts about an hour. The New Hampshire Public Radio podcast raises pros and cons regarding the system of Current Use, and I HIGHLY recommend listening to it. See the November, 2019 NHACC e-News and press on "To listen" at the end of the Current Use paragraph.
- b) Update from Frank on the Town Preserve new parking lot on Cottle Hill Road and on the possible next logging operation on the Preserve.
- c) Looking for someone to take on the meeting minutes.

7) Selectman's Report

8) Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 1?? Should we take a month off?

9) Close meeting