

**Hanover Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes- Special Meeting at noon
April 7, 2010**

Present:

Commission Members: Ed Chamberlain, Sandy White, Judy Reeve, Anne Morris, Doug McIlroy

Others:

Nik Fiore (Engineering Ventures), Peter Kermond (Friends of Hanover Crew {FOHC}), Nancy Carter (FOHC), Carin Reynolds (FOHC)

The start of the meeting was delayed until a quorum of the Board arrived.

Discussion of Functions and Values Report for Friends of Hanover Crew

This meeting was held in order to review the functions and values report submitted by FOHC in support of their State Dredge and Fill application.

Doug McIlroy took issue with the assessment of the visual impact. In Doug's opinion, a 180 foot dock diminishes the aesthetic value of the site when viewed from the river and the shore. He noted that the scale of the proposal is of great concern. Doug also thought it odd that the report suggested that birds be discouraged from nesting in the Connecticut River basin due to fluctuations in water level. Anne agreed and thought the report was too dismissive of the educational values to the public and to the flora and fauna.

Anne Morris took issue with the assessment of educational opportunities and felt the report was self-serving. There are plenty of educational opportunities available at the Landing and all are not geared toward the rowers. It is a public place used by bird watching groups regularly. She felt the impact on wildlife should take into account the use of the dock, not just the dock itself.

Sandy White had no comments.

Judy Reeve noted that based on the size of the project, mitigation is required and that money should be used at Wilson's Landing. Nik confirmed that conversations have begun regarding on site mitigation. Vicki warned that if there is a change to the application that it might delay the review by the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Judy foresaw impact on trees and shrubs on the peninsula with more people walking there.

Judy wondered if the dock will trap debris floating down the river. Judy wondered if given the number of soil augers needed to erect the dock would cause a great deal of sedimentation every time the dock is installed and removed. Peter Kermond responded that this disturbance would only occur twice per year.

Judy wondered if a limit on the number of students who could be involved in the program could be made.

A vehicle will move gas cans back and forth from the Landing to the boat sheds to minimize the likelihood of spillage. With 9 boats being used for 50 days, that is 450 gas fillings and the opportunity for spillage is great just given the large number of fillings. Only adults will be handling the gas. Even with these precautions, Ed felt that gas cans should be stored out of the 75 foot setback. Judy suggested

storing the gas in the barn. Nik pointed out that the floodplain is below the sheds. Judy noted that the plans do not show where the gas will be stored or how gas will be delivered to the sheds.

Doug McIlroy liked the Functions and Values report and wondered if it had been sent to the State. It had not. Doug did not like the idea of lights on the dock as suggested by the Connecticut River Joint Commissions.

Judy Reeve made a motion to send the following comments to NH DES:

The narrative submitted with the application and accompanying reports does not acknowledge the size of the dock and how significant a change there will be with nine motor boats and twelve to fourteen crew boats using the dock on a regular basis.

The Commission agrees that the impacts of the crew program are already being experienced on the River, but that the focus of impact along the shoreline is being moved to Wilson's Landing from the Dartmouth College docks. The Commission notes that installation of the dock brings along impacts from the use of the dock which merit consideration.

The Commission does not agree with the assessment that the impact on visual quality and aesthetics when considered from the River "is not anticipated to be significant". The visual impact of a dock that is 180 feet long and 10 feet wide and its 90 foot ramp is significant especially since there is already a boat dock that is more residential in scale at the Landing.

The Commission believes that the author of the functions and values assessment missed the point of the Landing's educational value. Wilson's Landing offers many opportunities for learning and consideration of that potential should include a larger audience than high school rowers. In addition, while the Landing may not provide educational opportunities for undisturbed natural community types, there is plenty of wildlife and it is a living workshop for learning about topics such as river dynamics, siltation and water quality. Indeed, the Hanover Conservation Council and Mascoma Chapter of the NH Audubon Society use Wilson's Landing for bird watching trips.

Given the size of the dock and number of augers needed to anchor it, the Commission notes that the impacts to water quality each time the dock is installed or removed may be significant.

The Commission takes exception with the statement on page 2 of the wildlife review that "it might be better for birds to be deterred from nesting in the catch basin for the Wilder Dam." Although this statement seems to apply only to birds nesting on the water, the impact on them is from the Wilder Dam, not the rowing dock, and thus is irrelevant to evaluation of this application.

The Commission noted that the functions and values assessment is not certified by a NH wetlands scientist.

The Commission disagrees with the Connecticut River Joint Commission's recommendation that lights be installed on the dock to facilitate boat navigation at night.

While the Friends have stated that there will be no re-fueling in the boats or on the dock, the Commission would like all filling of gas tanks to occur out of the Town's 75 foot setback from the top of the bank of the River in order to minimize the impact of spills on the water quality of the River.

The Commission supports the use of mitigation at Wilson's Landing itself and would like to review the mitigation plan before it is approved by the State. One design element the Commission would support is plantings to deter people from walking south on the peninsula where they might disturb wildlife and damage the vegetation which has the potential to result in erosion.

The Commission noted that installation of the concrete pad will disturb an area larger than the pad itself and there are no detailed plans for how the dock will be mounted to the pad.

The Conservation Commission looks forward to reviewing a mitigation plan for Wilson's Landing.

Ed Chamberlain seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Other Business

Paul Harwood has discovered old growth forest at the Steele property with trees that are more than 200 years old.

The Selectboard has suggested that the Commission pay \$84,000 for the 4.2 acres adjoining the Trescott Ridge Wetlands. The Lamprey appraisal for that part of the Hayes property estimated that the back 4.2 acres was worth 13.1% of the sales purchase price, or approximately \$47,160. The Commission considered the trail access to the back acreage as being worth more than that estimated value. On a motion by Judy Reeve to use \$55,000 from the Conservation Fund to help with the purchase of the Hayes property, which was seconded by Anne Morris, there was unanimous approval. This expenditure will need to be approved at Town Meeting.

The owners of property at the intersection of Ruddsboro and Hanover Center Roads would like to conserve about 3 acres at the corner. A neighbor is willing to split the cost with the Town. The neighbor would like to own the property and would like the Town to hold a conservation easement on that land. The Commission was enthusiastic about working on this project but wanted the owners to know that the Town is interested in protecting the open fields behind the three acres. Vicki was directed to communicate that wish to conserve the open fields to the owners. She was also directed to engage an appraiser to value the 3 acres at fair market value, the 3 acres restricted against development and the remaining open fields at fair market value and those fields at restricted value.

Judy Reeve made a motion to adjourn. Anne Morris seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned around 3:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicki Smith using Ed Chamberlain's notes