

**Hanover Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 14, 2010**

Present:

Commission Members: Ed Chamberlain, Sandy White, Judy Reeve, Ray Hogue, Michael Mayor, Anne Morris

Others:

Russell Hirschler (UV Trails Alliance), Nik Fiore (Engineering Ventures), Peter Kermond (Friends of Hanover Crew {FOHC}), Nancy Carter (FOHC), Carin Reynolds (FOHC), Blair Brooks (FOHC), Alice and John Creagh, Carol Weingeist, Tina Scharf (Wildlife biologist), Daniel Johnson (Watershed Studio), Betsy Sylvester, Iain Sim (Planning Board), Steve Fowler (Hanover Conservation Council), Harold Frost, Julia Griffin

Current Business

Discussion with Russell Hirschler about Upper Valley Trails Alliance trail planning and trail finder

Russell described how some emails and maps should have reflected the more tentative nature of planned trails in the area of Route 120. The trail finder will debut on June 5, National Trails Day.

Discussion and recommendations to the ZBA for the Friends of Hanover Crew's applications for installation of a seasonal crew dock at Wilson's Landing and improvements to Fullington Farm for rowing club improvements

Special exceptions are needed under Section 701.7 Floodplain for the dock and Section 702 for the dock and boat storage sheds.

Judy Reeve wondered about the stability of the dock given the currents at that location and the winds. FOHC responded that the dock was designed with those currents and winds in mind. Nik Fiore will submit a construction sequence and details of the dock attachment to the Planning Office.

Doug McIlroy questioned whether this aspect of minimization had been addressed: removal of the existing dock. Blair Brooks responded that there are no cleats for boat attachment on the crew dock and the existing dock does have cleats needed by many people in order to tie up to the dock. Anne Morris thought that two docks provide redundancy in the case of emergency. Alice Creagh supported not removing the existing dock as it is configured better for older persons to board a boat. Judy Reeve added that her friend, Carol Weingeist, said that the lip at the edge of the existing dock prevents wheelchairs from going into the water. Carol noted that the existing dock is safer for families with children. Ray Hogue thought the existing dock is valuable for public viewing of regattas.

Ed Chamberlain thought that the placement of the boat storage sheds should be done in a way that minimizes the disturbance to the Creagh's view. Nik Fiore presented pictorial representations of the boat sheds in four different locations in order to evaluate the impacts on the view from the access road. He pointed out that the proposed location for the sheds has the least impact on the Creagh's view and also is closest to the dock.

The Commission wondered what the capacity of each shed was and how many boats are used by the Hanover Crew program. Blair Brooks explained that two sheds are needed so that rack space can be rented. This rental income is needed to support the operation of the club. The boats cannot be stored on trailers because they cannot be stored while rigged on the trailer. Sandy White commented that the

height of the sheds is greater than she expected. The sheds are spaced to allow for boats to pass by. Carol Weingeist wondered why dollies cannot be used to bring the boats down from the barn so as to eliminate the need for the sheds. Blair Brooks said that dollies only work for singles, not fours or eights. Peter Kermond sells dollies and confirmed that they are not designed for the larger boats.

Judy Reeve was concerned about stormwater drainage damaging the vegetation west of the sheds. Nik Fiore pointed out that some of that vegetation is invasive and will be removed. Judy said the scale of the plan is too small to determine the drainage details. She is concerned that the swales associated with the sheds will fail due to clogging and freezing and will result in run off going into the access road.

Judy was also concerned about gas storage in the boat sheds. She suggested a location near the barn with more distance between the gas storage area and the Connecticut River. Blair Brooks described the concrete containment area that would be built into the boat sheds. The gas will be carried in detachable tanks to Wilson's Landing and put on a truck so there will be no possibility of spillage into the River.

Doug was in favor of mitigation for the project addressing the removal of all invasives. Nik reminded Doug that mitigation can only occur on the Wilson's Landing property.

Alice Creagh thought that a 120 foot long dock would be better than and 180 foot dock and would minimize the dock impact. The FOHC needs the long dock in order to launch 3 boats at a time. Alice also thought that only one shed was needed and that it could be located close to the barn. John Creagh worried about gas leaks and negative impacts on water quality when the gas tanks are disconnected. Blair Brooks said that there are kill switches on the hoses to prevent those types of leaks.

At 7:15 pm, the discussion was closed temporarily in order to hold the public hearings scheduled for 7:00 PM.

Public Hearing

Public Hearing on Expenditures from Conservation Fund for the purchase and protection of six acres at 83 Lyme Road and the back 4.2 acres of the Hayes property at 122 Etna Road

At 7:30 pm, Vicki Smith gave brief power point presentations about the properties. Julia Griffin was present to describe the potential uses of the Hayes property. The public hearing was closed at 8:15 pm.

Return to Current Business

Discussion and recommendations to the ZBA for the Friends of Hanover Crew's applications for installation of a seasonal crew dock at Wilson's Landing and improvements to Fullington Farm for rowing club improvements

At 8:30 pm, the discussion of the FOHC's applications continued.

Ed Chamberlain made a motion to send the following comments to the Zoning Board of Adjustment:

The Commission notes that the plans should be stamped by the engineer responsible for preparing the plans. The Commission believes that the plans for Fullington Farm should be prepared at a scale that produces plans where the drainage can be more easily understood. The 1" to 40' scale does not provide enough detail about the drainage around the proposed sheds.

The Commission's comments on the Wilson's Landing application are as follows:

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.

One commissioner asked that you consider removal of the existing dock in the interests of minimization. The majority of the commissioners supported keeping the existing dock for other users of Wilson's Landing.

The Commission notes that installation of the dock brings along impacts from the use of the dock (as distinct from the installation of the dock itself) which merit consideration. 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. These impacts include disruption to wildlife, possible gas leaks affecting the water quality and intensification of use that will change the character of the area.

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 even if 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 disagrees with the Connecticut River Joint Commission's recommendation that lights be installed on the dock to facilitate boat navigation at night as this will alter the character of the area.

While the Friends have stated that there will be no re-fueling in the boats or on the dock, the Commission would like all gasoline storage and 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 and Zoning Board of Adjustment. 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. Another is to clear Wilson's Landing of invasive plants. Since purple loosestrife-eating beetles were not successful in controlling purple loosestrife, the use of the root weevil as pioneered by Bernd Blossey at Cornell, is suggested.

The Commission noted that installation of the concrete pad will disturb an area larger than the pad itself and question whether the attachment of the dock to the pad is an adequate anchor for a dock that large given the winds in the valley and currents in the Connecticut River. This element of the plan should be stamped by the design engineer.

The Commission's comments on proposed improvements at Fullington Farm are as follows:

The Commission unanimously suggested that the proposed use of the sheds could be served by making better use of the existing barn. They note that the average distance from the proposed sheds to the dock is about 500 feet and that the distance from the barn to the dock is 700 feet. They do not think this difference is significant enough to warrant placing two new structures in the wetland buffer and impacting the view enjoyed by the neighbor and the public who use the Wilson's Landing access road. The Commission agrees that moving the sheds out of the buffer does impact the view to the River and thus negatively affects the character of the area. In deference to the impact on the view and to preserve the character of the area, the boats should be stored in the barn. In addition, less soil is disturbed and less storm water runoff will be generated by improvements at the Fullington Farm.

If the Zoning Board of Adjustment is convinced that the barn cannot satisfy the Friends' boat storage needs, please consider the following observations.

The Commission is not convinced about the need for two sheds. The high school rowing program could be accommodated in one shed. Rental of boat storage space drives the need for a second shed which is proposed to be located wholly in the wetland buffer. One shed protruding into the wetland buffer will have less impact on the buffer and views and will generate less storm water runoff.

The two proposed shed roofs add 4350 square feet of impervious surface to the site. When the proposed drop inlets are clogged with leaves, debris or ice—as they inevitably will, the drainage from the roofs will ultimately discharge to the unpaved access road, causing erosion and increasing the transport of sediment to the Connecticut River.

The Commission strongly suggests that all roof drainage be routed through rain gardens (including proposed drop inlets to the subsurface perforated pipes) to detain the runoff. Drainage to the south via a rain garden is preferable to the proposed north-bound drainage. In no case should storm water be directed toward the access road without a backup, alternative plan when the drains don't function.

An additional benefit to using the barn for all of the boat storage is that gas storage and re-filling would occur somewhere near the barn and out of the wetland setback.

This motion was seconded by Judy Reeve and was unanimously approved.

Follow up on Public Hearing

Given the strategic conservation nature of the properties and the natural resources found on the properties and given there was only favorable response to the proposals to use conservation funds for purchase of the back 4.2 acres of the Hayes property and the 6 acre Steele property, Anne Morris made a motion that was seconded by Ed, to proceed with the purchases using conservation funds. Town Meeting will also have to approve these purchases using the Conservation Fund. This motion was unanimously approved.

Judy Reeve made a motion to defer the remainder of the agenda until May. Anne Morris seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicki Smith using Ed Chamberlain's notes