

**Conservation Commission Meeting
August 9, 2023 at 7:30 PM**

The New Ipswich Conservation Commission scheduled a public meeting on Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at 7:30 PM to 8:10 PM at the Town Office.

PRESENT: Bob Boynton *Chairman*, David McTigue, and Karen Miller

ABSENT: Matt Oliveira, Kleta Dudley, and Mike Bara

The Meeting was called to order at **7:30 PM**.

Bob Boynton spoke about a title search being done on Mason Road. The property is owned the Town, Map: 14B Lot: 2. This piece of property in the middle that is surrounded by the Shaw's property. This middle property is landlocked and as a result, there is no access to this property. The Commission did some research with that state, on the State's road map it is listed as a private road. Which leaves Bob to believe that at some point in time, it was made official because otherwise it wouldn't be on the slate. The reason this is brought up is because there are a half of dozen pieces of property in town that are not protected. There is no conservation easement on these properties. Years ago, the Selectmen said these are conservation lands so protect it but, if the Selectmen wanted to tomorrow, they could sell these properties. This would not be a good situation. Bob is unsure what the alternative option would be. He suggested that the deed could be modified with restrictions. For example, that the land can't be developed. This would need the Selectmen's approval. If the Selectmen have in mind to sell the land, they may not want to do that. This is a problem for the property on Mason Road, as for the other six properties. Bob asked for the attorney to give a second opinion, but has not yet been in touch. Karen Miller asked how many acres is the lot. One of the properties is known to have 19 acres and the other 150 acres. It is believed that The Shaw's would like to purchase the property on Mason Road (Katz Property) because of the road that goes out to this property, The Shaw's may want to extend their trash collection, which would be a horrible end for that property since it is conservation property now. The Selectmen are waiting to find the outcome of title search as they may want to sell to The Shaw's, as well as an offer from Shaw's of \$60,000. Bob has not been to a Selectmen meeting to discuss it, but would like to go in the future to state the intent to protect land is not for recreational purposes, but to protect the natural resources in the town. When the time comes Bob asks for the commission members to attend the next BOS meeting to back up his statement.

Karen Miller motioned to approve meeting minutes from July 12, 2023. Chair seconded. All were in favor.

Attendance was low at the last meeting, it was decided that in the future the Land Use Clerk will send out reminders two days before conservation meetings as well as to send out draft meetings for early review.

Bob would like to get a Shore Land Protection Permit for a parcel of land off the Souhegan River near Warwick Mills. This piece of property was recently subdivided and after construction was deemed to have a bad plan, but approved by the State. Bob is trying to get the Souhegan River Watershed Associations to send the Conservation Commission a copy of applications when they receive them so that Conservation Commission can also look at the properties which are being applied for. This would help the commission, because it could then conduct research on the property to assess what the impact would be for the town. Karen and Bob agreed with this and stated had there been knowledge of the subdivision prior to construction, the Commission could have viewed the property ahead of time to plan accordingly for special meetings. In the event it would need a vote of approval, all agreed that prior knowledge of these rare cases would be beneficial to inform members in the future.

Bob brought up attendance again. He asked the board, how we should deal with members who are not attending meetings on a regular basis. Attendance is crucial because when members are absent it becomes difficult to stay on topic or move forward with projects because the time spent on relating information over again takes away from the current agenda. Karen noted that she understands this statement, but to remember that members always have access to meeting minutes. It was decided that Bob will be in touch with commission members to get an idea if there is still an interest in being involved with the commission.

8:00 PM

There is \$296,402.13 in the Conservation's bank account. This is somewhat concerning because at the moment there is little land to protect at current time. Which usually the commission would spend on purchasing and protecting land. Since there are no plans to spend, options were discussed how to expend these monies. Karen suggested spending on educating the public by planting trees, trail projects, public events, and other outreach venues to offer to the community. This would help with the public's understanding of what the mission statement of the Conservation Commission is. Another option is to teach the community ways that they can protect natural resources on their properties. Bob suggested targeting certain parcels of land that meet certain criteria and invite property owners to a meeting in order to educate and bring awareness to easements. In the past, the commission was able to get the community involved by doing water testing, which was very informative and educational to its participants. There are also two trees at the Town's playground that were planted by the commission years ago. Those are still there for the children to enjoy. Karen mentioned that the commission could look into the outreach conducted by the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions to use as a resource for coming up with other ideas on how to spend available funds.

Bob wanted to discuss 20 potential properties in New Ipswich that are over 25 acres per lot, but due to technical difficulties it was decided to end the meeting and carry this over to the next agenda.

Meeting adjourned at **8:10 PM**.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Jennifer Worth

Land Use Clerk