



TOWN OF HUDSON

Conservation Commission



Carl Murphy, Chairman

Dave Morin, Selectmen Liaison

12 School Street • Hudson, New Hampshire 03051 • Tel: 603-886-6008 • Fax: 603-816-1291

DATE: February 10, 2025

MEETING MINUTES: Below is a listing of minutes for the Hudson Conservation Commission. Minutes are not a verbatim record of each meeting, but rather represent a summary of the discussion and actions taken at the meeting. All Conservation Commission meetings are televised live and repeated during the following week on HCTV, cable television channel 22. Official copies of the minutes are available to read and copy at the Town Engineer's Office during regular business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.).

Should you have any questions concerning these minutes or wish to see the original recording, please contact the Town Engineer's Office at 603-886-6008.

In attendance = X Alternates Seated = S Partial Attendance = P Excused Absence = E

Vacant
Chairman E

Carl Murphy
Vice-Chair X

Ken Dickinson
Clerk P

John Walter
Member X

Linda Krisciunas
Alternate S*

David Morin
Selectman Rep X

Elvis Dhima
Town Engineer X

Chris Cameron
Member X

CALL TO ORDER BY CHAIRPERSON AT 07:00 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

SEATING OF ALTERNATES: *Ms. Krisciunas was seated as a regular member until the arrival of Mr. Dickinson at 7:31pm.

Public Input Related to Non-Agenda Items: None

I. New Business:

a. Site Plan Review – 256 Lowell Rd (T-Bones)

Sam Foisie, Engineer for Meridian Land Services, Inc., presented the site plan for the proposed

development at 256 Lowell Rd, adjacent to (directly south of) Walmart, which would impact approximately 130,000 square feet (SF) (3.00 acres) of terrain, including approximately 17,000 SF (0.39 ac.) of permanent impacts to the wetland buffer area in the southern portion of the site. Some additional temporary wetland buffer impacts are anticipated for the construction of the stormwater retention ponds but will be restored to a similar condition to existing afterward so the area can continue to function as a wetland buffer. No direct wetland impacts are anticipated. The site plan is scheduled to be presented to the Hudson Planning Board on 2/26/2025.

The applicant indicated that the wetland buffer was incorrectly shown in the meeting handout materials as 50 feet (previous requirement) and had since been revised to show the current 75 feet requirement. The numbers provided during the meeting were based on the correct measurement. It was indicated by Mr. Dhima that a relatively small area adjacent to the proposed driveway apron at Lowell Rd was shown to be outside of the wetland buffer but was also part of the buffer and was not shown correctly. The applicant indicated that Mr. Dhima was correct and that the plan would be corrected accordingly.

There was discussion on the proposed driveway access on Lowell Rd, which is being required by the owner of the adjacent Walmart store as a stipulation of the use of shared access to their driveway for the main entrance to the site. Concern was expressed by several members and the Town Engineer about high speeds and traffic volumes on Lowell Rd, sight distance, and the proximity to the intersection with the commercial plaza roadways for Walmart and Sam's Club. It was indicated that the proposed driveway connected to Lowell Rd would likely be required for emergency egress, regardless of Walmart's stipulations. This driveway is proposed primarily within the wetland buffer due to geometric constraints and a requirement by Walmart to have the driveway opening located outside of the right turn lane into their driveway and associated taper.

Mr. Cameron expressed concerns with the significant extent of the tree clearing and site disturbance, particularly within the wetland buffer area and along the roadways. Mr. Cameron noted the interior of the site is currently not visible from Lowell Rd or the Walmart driveway. There also appears to be landscaping, including planted trees, along the Walmart Driveway adjacent to the site. The applicant indicated the limits of clearing are proposed to extend to the property line along the roadway and driveway and would likely remove any buffer trees in those areas. Mr. Cameron indicated a desire to see as many of those trees retained as feasible, particularly outside of the parking lot limits. The applicant indicated that any trees adjacent to excavation would likely not be able to be saved due to root disturbance.

Concern was also expressed by Mr. Cameron about the number of parking spots being proposed, adjacent to the large parking lots at Walmart and well in excess of the number of spaces required by the town (~176 proposed vs 126 required), based on the number of seats proposed in the restaurant. The applicant expressed that parking was a priority for the client and they would be highly reluctant to reduce the number of spaces. The applicant indicated that the layout of the site plan has been optimized to provide the maximum amount of parking the site would reasonably support. Mr. Cameron asked if there was a traffic study/trip generation report to support the number of proposed parking spaces, and if any agreement had been, or could be, pursued with the owner of Walmart to share some of their parking. The client indicated that the owner of Walmart was reluctant to share their driveway access and would be even more reluctant to share any parking, plus the Walmart parking is a significant distance away that it is not desirable to share that space for customer parking.

Mr. Cameron asked Mr. Dhima if there were any stipulations in the driveway permit for Walmart that

required the driveway to be shared and would allow the proposed development to use the access without the added requirement of a secondary driveway connected to Lowell Rd. Mr. Dhima was unsure but indicated that the secondary driveway would likely be required anyway for emergency egress at the very least.

Mr. Dickinson expressed concern with the proximity of the stormwater basins to the parking lots and recommended more buffer space be provided, to include shrubs.

Mr. Murphy also expressed concern with the number of parking spaces and asked if there was any way it could be reduced. Mr. Murphy asked if any of the stormwater storage could be placed beneath the parking lot areas to reduce the impact to the wetland buffer area. The applicant indicated that they would investigate that possibility.

b. Open Space Report (2012) Update

There was a general discussion about the content of the open space plan and parcels of particular interest for potential conservation. Mr. Dickinson presented some of the history of the plan and the Conservation Commission subcommittee that developed the plan. Mr. Cameron asked if the open space plan was part of the Hudson Master Plan and Mr. Dickinson indicated that parts of it were incorporated into the master plan.

Mr. Dhima brought up the town GIS map on the screen and some parcels of interest were identified for future discussion, including a few parcels owned by Monahan Properties that contain wetlands and abut town and state land. Mr. Dhima indicated that the Circumferential Highway/Hudson Boulevard appears to be a “dead” project and that the state will likely begin to sell off the associated right-of-way parcels to the highest bidder in the near future. Mr. Cameron indicated that some of these parcels would be of high value for conservation.

There was a general discussion on the high cost of purchasing land and any available funding options, including state and federal grants, land trusts, the forest society, etc. Mr. Dickinson indicated that Hudson, along with Londonderry and Litchfield, are in the unfortunate position of being outside of the region of the major land trusts in the area. There is one that serves communities to the west of the Merrimack River and another that serves Pelham and other communities further to the east.

It was discussed that the open space plan should be updated, primarily focusing on a table showing different parcels that have been conserved, those that have been developed, parcels previously identified for conservation, and newly identified parcels for conservation. This topic will remain open for discussion at future meetings to determine a course of action.

c. Trail Stewardship

Mr. Walter introduced the idea of a hiker volunteer stewardship program which would encourage and enable community groups and individuals to get involved with organized hikes, trail maintenance, and land conservation efforts. Mr. Cameron indicated this seems like an excellent idea that warrants future discussion. This item to be discussed at the next meeting to determine a course of action.

II. Old Business:

a. Election of Officers:

Annual election of officers was held. Mr. Murphy listed the open positions: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary/Cleark. Mr. Murphy then asked if anyone would like to make a motion to nominate a candidate for any of the open positions. Mr. Dickinson indicated that he would be willing

to accept the role as Vice-Chairman if elected.

Mr. Walter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cameron, to nominate Mr. Dickinson as Vice-Chairman; Motion carried 3/0/1, with Mr. Dickinson abstaining.

Mr. Walter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cameron, to nominate Mr. Murphy as Chairman; Motion carried 3/0/1, with Mr. Murphy abstaining.

Mr. Walter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Dickinson, to nominate Mr. Cameron as Secretary/Clerk; Mr. Cameron indicated he was not seeking this position but would accept the responsibilities if elected;

Motion carried 3/0/1, with Mr. Cameron abstaining.

b. Trails Sub-Committee:

Mr. Murphy suggested that this be deferred to a later date, at least until a full membership could be reached. This was verbally agreed to be deferred to a future date, with no formal vote taken.

III. Other Business:

a. Wilkinson Pond View Trail/Gumpus Pond Loop Trail

Mr. Murphy recapped that temporary blazes had been installed during the recent trail work day and indicated the need to go back out and mark the trails with the correct color blazes to correspond to the map colors.

b. Trail Work Day

General consensus was to set a tentative date for 3/22/2025, to be confirmed at the March meeting.

c. Forest Society Donation

Mr. Murphy raised the agenda item for discussion of whether to continue the annual contribution to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (NH Forest Society) which was increased the previous year from \$50 to \$75. Mr. Cameron asked what the history behind the donation was and if it makes sense for one conservation group to donate to another. Mr. Dickinson indicated that the donation likely started when the Forest Society acquired the Bockes Forest/tri-town property in Hudson and had been an annual donation ever since. Mr. Dickinson asked if the proposed amount was enough to make any significant impact and suggested that consideration be made to raise the contribution amount the following year. Mr. Murphy indicated that the visions of the Hudson Conservation Commission and the Forest Society are generally aligned, of which the members generally agreed. Mr. Dickinson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cameron, to continue the annual donation to the NH Forest Society. The motion passed 3/0/1, with Mr. Murphy abstaining as he is employed by the organization in question.

IV. Financial Status:

a. Current report provided.

b. Mr. Dhima provided clarification on some of the expenditure items related to the Robinson Pond area.

V. Correspondence:

a. Letter from Pelham Conservation Commission, dated 1/23/2025, notifying abutters of a proposal to upgrade an existing wetland area within the Gumpus Pond Conservation Area to the status of “Prime

Wetland". A public hearing will be held about this proposal during the Pelham Conservation Commission meeting on 3/12/2025.

VI. Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Walter made a motion to accept the January 13, 2025 regular meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Cameron;

Motion Carried 4/0/0

VII. Commissioner's Comments:

None

VIII. Motion to adjourn:

Mr. Walter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cameron, to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:15 PM;

Motion Carried 4/0/0

Next Regular Meeting: Monday, March 10, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Cameron", written in a cursive style.

Christopher Cameron, Clerk