



# Gilmanton Conservation Commission

PO Box 550

Gilmanton NH 03237-0550

conservation@gilmantonnh.org (603) 267-6700 ext. 122

## Minutes of August 11, 2020

**Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. by Chairman Dick de Seve. Those present included Chairman Dick de Seve, Alternate Member Sue Hale-de Seve, Vice Chair Jennifer Baker, Member Stephen Hopkins, Member Ed Bernstine, Member Paula Gilman, and Alt. Member Thomas Dombrowski along with the Conservation Commission Clerk Bre Daigneault. Member Patrick Hackley had an excused absence. There were seven members of the public virtually present. Due to the COVID-19 emergency order, this meeting was held virtually by utilizing the *Zoom* platform.

### **A. Minutes of June 9, 2020**

Member Bernstine made the motion to accept the minutes of June 9, 2020 as written. The motion was seconded by Member Gilman. **All in 6-0 in favor**

### **B. Correspondence/Announcements**

- Admin. Daigneault received a letter of concern from resident Nic Peterson regarding the condition of Shellcamp. In the past few years, the waterfront has increased vegetation at a tremendous rate. Chair de Seve has spoken with Mr. Peterson. The resident had found a company in Massachusetts who does clear the vegetation by machinery or chemicals. Members would not be for the use of chemicals and Chair did not feel DES would approve such use. Chair de Seve had also spoken with Amy Smagoula with DES, a vegetation specialist. She had completed an analysis within the past 2-3 years and had not found any invasives. Mr. Peterson is looking for an estimate of costs to see if something can be done. Chair de Seve suggested Mr. Peterson speak with DES as permits will be needed, which could be time consuming and expensive. VC Baker inquired if there would be preventative measures with the quote. Chair was unsure.
- The GCC had received a notification from Sunset Hill Design as an abutter. They would be installing a septic system encroaching within well radius of some neighboring properties. The property was over 600' from the GCC land, which is vacant. This would not seem to negatively impact the GCC land.

### **C. Conservation Easements, Monitoring and Stewardship**

- A letter from the Society for the Protection of NH Forests had been received requesting an updated monitoring report from the GCC for the Cogswell Mountain Conservation Areas. Member Bernstine offered to walk these properties. He would like some recommendations on the monitoring procedures.

### **D. Wetlands/Shorelands/Biosolid/Intent-to-Cut/Forestry Notifications/Applications**

### **E. Review of Invoices/Cost/Budget**

### **F. Planning Board/Zoning Board Applications**

### **G. Complaints/Violations/Concerns**

## **H. New Business**

### **I. Old Business**

- Strategy Planning & 2020 Commission Goals- Members agreed to combine this with the NRI meetings, as the NRI is part of the Strategic Planning. Member Hopkins suggested members continue to complete a prioritization initiative, as well as focus on solidifying the sharing software (Microsoft 365, for example). Admin. Daigneault has been waiting for a response from the Town's IT. She would follow up with the Commission on the progress. Resident Ernest Gillan offered his opinion on sharing software. He felt the Microsoft software would be easily trackable and user friendly.
- Frisky Hill (Twiggs) Property- Chair de Seve started the conversation with an overview of the acquisition of the Twiggs properties. The easements were provided by the Twigg's to the Gilmanton Land Trust and 5 Rivers Conservation Trust. At the signing of the deeds, they were deeded to the Town of Gilmanton for the use and enjoyment for the people of Gilmanton. Chair de Seve read from the purpose of the easement: "to provide for low impact, non-commercial, pedestrian outdoor recreational and educational use by the general public on the property" and to "provide for scenic enjoyment by the general public...". The easements provide for ancillary structures as that may include roads, trails, fences, culverts, barns, maple syrup houses, farm stands and/or sheds", as well as "provide construct, maintain and repair a parking area with access from Route 107..." or a parking area developed on the adjacent area. Chair de Seve requested to open the discussion for members of the public. Chair understands there are some deeply felt feelings about this issue, and he asks that everyone be respectful and keep the discussion about the topic itself. Member Bernstine inquired if a time limit should be implemented. Members agreed. Chair de Seve requested Admin. Daigneault read the letters previously submitted to the board, whom were not present. The letters read were from Graham Wilson, Mrs. George Twigg III (Anna Mae Twigg), and Glenn and Meredith Tonnesen; all in opposition of the pull-off. Member Hopkins inquired as to a letter sent in from the Gilmanton Land Trust. Tom Howe, of the GLT, was present on the line and read the statement. The Land Trust Board of Directors supports the GCC make only such changes as are minimally needed to accommodate the installation of the recognition plaque /boulder and the horizon display sign immediately adjacent to and southeast from the existing ramp without accommodation of additional vehicles. Member Hopkins also inquired about a letter from Bill Donahue. Admin. Daigneault did find the email and read Mr. Donahue's statement against the pull-off area. Chair de Seve inquired of residents on the Zoom meeting to provide their opinions. Mr. Towle felt the GLT was unanimous against this, members of the GCC are against it, donors are against it, and abutters are against it, why is this still being pursued. He feels many people can still enjoy the view. Members Gilman and Dombrowski requested to read the letter they had submitted; against the pull-off. Mr. David Knibbs' major concern was changing the land they look at every day and the second major concern is the safety. Member Hopkins added there is an open well on the property which he has marked and notes as concern. Ms. Katie Kardinal seconded the comments most of the people have brought up. As a large landowner, herself, she battles trespassing and garbage on their property. She also does not find it appropriate for the people living in the area. These tax payers pay for the view, which will now be a view of cars and a parking lot. The neighbors would also be tasked with policing the area and cleaning up after visitors. Mr. Gillan started by thanking the donors who helped contribute to obtaining this land for conservation. His guess is these donors did not put their money forward to support a scenic view parking area. Mr. Gillan supports the other comments made by residents this night, both in writing and in person. He would also like to know the liability standpoint with scenic views. Mr. Gillan inquired if the GCC has received any letters in support of the parking lot. Admin. Daigneault stated she had not received any letters of support. Resident Heather Carpenter spoke next, in favor of the pull off. She felt the GCC has worked on this project for a long time now. The deed is very specific and it was her understanding the intent was always to have a pull off. She feels the current situation is unsafe nor does she feel the pull off would be unsafe.

There is a lot of conservation land, but not a lot of land for people to be able to get out and enjoy. Alt. Member Dombrowski asked for clarification if Ms. Carpenter was for a parking lot. Ms. Carpenter clarified she was not for a "parking lot" but is for a safer place to pull off. There was a brief discussion regarding the safety of the current configuration. Mr. D. Knibbs felt adding a parking area would draw more people to the area causing overflow parking on the road side and making it hard for people to pull out of the parking lot. Ms. Kardinal agreed. She felt a formal parking lot would have more and more people attracted to the area. She feels this would be attracting problems. Member Bernstine agreed that a parking area would cause additional crime. Chair de Seve wanted to respond to a few issues that had been brought up. Firstly, the term "parking lot". What has been described is a small parking area, non-paved, for no more than 2 vehicles. He stated Member Hackley and Fuzz Freese had done a lot of work dealing with NHDOT to widen the shoulder. DOT was not in favor of widening the shoulder. They would require a major engineering study to do so. The GCC could not afford such a study. DOT did approve a pull off with a couple of parking spaces. It would be in the area of the plaque. The parking configuration has been changed three times to try to meet the concerns of residents. This is now Town land; people are going to walk the fields. The easement does provide for signage to dissuade people from walking the field during haying. The purpose is to encourage people on the property, on the field, walking the pond and the trees beyond. Alt. Member Hale-de Seve is not able herself to exit a vehicle safely with her condition to enjoy the view nor would she be able to view the memorial stone. Mr. Gillan made suggestions for the stone placement and possibly tier stepping the existing ramp for access without adding parking. Chair de Seve read the letter submitted by Member Hackley. Member Bernstine has been coming to Gilmanton for 30 years and has driven past the site thousands of times and has never stopped. He does not feel the location is fitting for anything other than a view and agricultural use. He feels the Commission's primary goal is to serve the public and to improve the quality of life for everyone in town. He feels this will do nothing but drop property values for the abutters; all of whom oppose it. He doesn't see how this serves the public interest when one of beautiful areas has a negative effect on the people that live there. Member Bernstine feels Route 107 is a drug route and having people pull off is not prudent. Lastly, he feels the NRI should include an analysis of spots that could work the best for access for those with disabilities. Vice Chair Baker has been listening to everyone. She understands the neighbors do not want something next to their homes, but they are speaking of a small access for people to pull off. She feels this is a "not in my back yard" situation. VC Baker works with the Special Olympics and in healthcare with the elderly. Her main concerns are with safety and access. She is not convinced this would increase the drugs or trash in the area. She feels they should proceed with the pull off. Alt. Member Hale-de Seve stated this is for everybody not for just those that live there. She does not feel people can safely exit their cars to access the property. Drugs happen in multiple locations around town. Chair de Seve stated he has set up a meeting with the GLT in September. He feels at this point, the Commission should either vote on the pull off tonight or push to the September meeting and discuss further options with the GLT. There were highly attended meetings in the past with no negative feedback at that time. It was the consensus of the commission to go forward with the pull off. Chair de Seve's preference is to table the petition, recognize the fact that people have spoken against this, and to move forward working with the GLT to find a compromise. Member Hopkins feels that because we could do something doesn't mean we should do something. He feels moving forward with this project does not make sense. He does not feel a gravel pull off that would be handicap accessible. He does not believe this would be a priority of the GCC, particularly where donors and the public are against it. He does not believe they are trying to keep people out; they are trying to keep it beautiful forever. Only they (the abutters) will be picking up the garbage. Chair de Seve reiterated, the Twiggs were a part of forming this easement with the way it was written. Member Hopkins inquired as to where the funds would come from. Chair de Seve stated the Conservation Fund had money for this, as well

as, he believed the GLT had funds set aside. Member Bernstine suggested to move this forward to the September meeting. Mr. Towle felt this should just be dropped. Chair de Seve asked the commission members to either make a decision tonight or postpone until the next meeting. He felt the members who signed the petition (Hopkins, Gilman, and Dombrowski) should recuse themselves from the vote. VC Baker felt the GCC should continue with meeting with the GLT in September. Chair said the consensus of the members was to move forward and meet with the GLT in September. Member Hopkins felt the GLT had stated their opinion and questioned why Chair de Seve wanted to go back to them. Chair de Seve stated they still need to enlarge a space to add the stone and viewer, as they are bound to do this by the terms of the easement. They need to decide whether to add the two parking spaces at the same time. Alt. Member Dombrowski inquired whether the existing spot lower on the hill, where a driveway exists could work for the stone. There is room for a minimum of one car, possibly two. The stone could be placed at an angle and still capture the view. Chair de Seve stated this is something they could discuss at the September meeting. Member Gilman added her opinion to continue the discussion in September.

**J. Upcoming Dates-**

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission will be on **Tuesday, September 8, 2020.**

**Adjournment**

Member Gilman made the motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Member Bernstine. All in favor 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Bre Daigneault, Conservation Admin.*

Attested by:



*Dick de Seve, Chair*

on

*9/18/20*

*Date*



Conservation Commission  
Academy Building  
503 Province Road  
Gilmanton, New Hampshire 03237  
[conservation@gilmantonnh.org](mailto:conservation@gilmantonnh.org)  
603.267.6700 ext. 29 -Phone 603.267.6701-Fax

ATTENDANCE SIGN-IN

Meeting Date: 8/11/2022

PRINT NAME

ADDRESS

Ernest Gillan

Katie Cardinal

David Knibbs

Doug Towle

Richard Knibbs

Tom Howe

Heather Carpenter