

LANCASTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION (LCC) MEETING MINUTES

Town Hall Town Hall Second Floor – January 13, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Margy Hobbs, Kathy-Jean Lavoie, Nancy Southworth, Sam Mayne, Kim Votta, Racheal Stuart

MEMBERS ABSENT: Troy Merner

OTHERS PRESENT: None

Stuart opened the meeting at 5:30

APPOINTMENTS and Public hearings: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Stuart introduced minutes for the December 13, 2021, Meeting. There was no discussion. *Southworth motioned to approve, and Hobbs seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

ONGOING BUSINESS:

Easement Monitoring: The easement monitoring team of Southworth, Mayne and Votta presented draft reports and recommendations on the conservation easements held by the Town of Lancaster. The Commission discussed and revised recommendations for next steps:

- **Southworth - Haslanger Easement** (presented by Mayne): *Lavoie motioned to approve recommended action items and Votta seconded. A vote was taken with Lavoie, Votta, Mayne, Hobbs and Stuart in Favor and Southworth abstaining. The motion carried.*
- **Southworth – Scobie Easement** (presented by Mayne): Members discussed the recommendations, including concerns about the purpose and use of the recently built structure, as well as the potential for bird strikes on the windows. It was noted that the LCC in 2020 had sought to clarify the purpose of the structure and accepted the landowner response. Given the ambiguity of communications between the building permit and the previous easement review, it was noted that re-clarifying the structure purpose would be useful. *Votta motioned to approve recommended action items and Mayne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*
- **Hirsey Easement** (presented by Southworth): *Lavoie motioned to approve recommended action items and Mayne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*
- **Town Water Plant Easement** (presented by Southworth): *Lavoie motioned to approve recommended action items and Hobbs seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*
- **Stowell Easement** (presented by Votta): Members discussed the recommendations, specifically the landowner interest in removing some trees to maintain the view. Votta noted the conservation deed prohibits commercial benefit from forestry and requires forestry to be conducted in accordance with a management plan for the site, to the extent reasonably practicable. At the same time, the deed also permits management activities to maintain the scenic view of the White Mountains. *A motion was made to approve the recommendations with the following additions: Landowner communication to clarify that no management plan is needed for removal of up to 20 trees, and that there will be no economic benefit to the landowner. Southworth motioned to approve, Lavoie seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.*
 - Votta reminded Commission members that Stowell is interested in placing an additional 10 acres +/- into conservation. In addition to discussing the specific additional easement,

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Votta suggested the LCC develop a screen for considering additional easements. This will be taken up at a future meeting in 2022.

- Smith Easement (presented by Votta): Commission members discussed the recommendations with particular focus on the interface of agricultural activities and conservation values, specifically water quality. It was noted that the conservation deed requires forestry operation to be conducted in accordance with a forestry management plan, and that forestry on this parcel is ongoing. Votta noted the Smith easement is the largest and most complex easement held by the Town, and that it is important to support the good work of the landowner while at the same time monitoring the potential ecological impacts of agriculture and forestry. *A motion was made to approve the recommendations with the following additions: 1) The report to LCIP will note that activities are in compliance at the time of the site walk, and 2) LCC may conduct an earlier easement monitoring in 2022. Votta motioned to approve, Hobbs seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.*
- Commission members expressed their appreciation for the thoughtful and thorough work of the team.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Stuart presented a draft letter to be sent to landowners abutting the Eversource D142 Transmission line. The purpose of the letter is to keep landowners informed of LCC activities related to the construction process and encourage them to communicate with Eversource if they have questions or concerns. *Hobbs motioned to approve the letter and Votta seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Stuart will work with Town management to get the letter out.*

OTHER BUSINESS

- Nomination Recommendations: *Stuart called for a motion to recommend to the Selectboard the appointment of Barbara Payer as LCC Clerk. Southworth motioned to approve, Lavoie seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Stuart noted the recommendation of clerk is in keeping with our Rules of Procedure.*
- Selectboard Report: None
- Treasurer's Report: Lavoie informed the Commission that she would be presenting the 2022 LCC administrative budget to the Town Budget Committee the following evening (Tuesday, January 11). She also noted that an additional \$1,410 will be added to the Conservation Fund in 2022, increasing the amount of the Fund from \$17,034 to \$18,444.

Noting that there was no further business to come before the committee, a motion to adjourn was called for. *Mayne motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mayne seconded. A vote was taken, the motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.*

Approved: February 14, 2022
Racheal Stuart, Chair

Kathy-Jean Lavoie, Vice-Chair

