

**LANCASTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION (LCC)
MEETING
April 12, 2021**

Meeting conducted via ZOOM and in public: Main Auditorium, Lancaster Town Hall

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by R. Christie.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Roll call was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rob Christie, Margaret Hobbs, Eric Livingston, Troy Merner. No Zoom attendees.

OTHERS PRESENT: Linda Upham, Rebecca More, Fletcher Manley, John Garrison, Jay Lavoie, Kathy Jean Lavoie, Peter Riviere, Lucy Wyman, Nancy Southworth, Racheal Stuart and Town Manager Benjamin Gaetjens-Oleson. Ms. Wyman recorded meeting via video. There were no Zoom attendees.

Meeting video is posted to https://youtu.be/Yhwft_QOiDw.

COVID AND ZOOM NOTICE:

R. Christie read the following:

This meeting is being held in an emergency status due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Under emergency circumstances, the meeting is being held via a videoconference exchange as well as in person. This will allow for the Committee to discuss and deliberate items contemporaneously and allow for public participation and engagement as permitted. All votes will be by roll call.

R, Christie made general announcements:

Welcome. I'm Rob Christie, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer of the LCC, and acting Chair pro-tem. We are very glad to see you, in person or by Zoom connection.

Ground rules:

Minutes will be kept and published as per RTK. In the absence of a Clerk today, the meeting will be recorded by Zoom, Video and voice recorder. Follow us on our Town web page, our Facebook page, and by attending our meetings, which are now recorded for your later review.

This is a public meeting, all may attend. Only permitted speakers are: Commission members, those who have made an appointment to appear, and those recognized by the Chair. We will ask if there is anything from the public before we adjourn. You might make a note of your questions as we go along.

A little background:

Your LCC is here to serve the people/ taxpayers of Lancaster in connection with our Duties by law and agreement. Some of our Duties are assigned by the local Legislative Body (Town voters). We work locally, with other Town organizations, regionally and Statewide. Some of what we do involves permits.

You (voters) support us financially through an annual budget allocation. We also have a non-lapsing Conservation Fund that allows us to support one-off projects through tax money, grants and contributions.

Our April meeting (first after Town Meeting) typically includes many housekeeping items.

This evening we have two additional tasks: recommend candidates for appointment to Commission vacancies, and act on an unusual action request on a Wetlands Permit.

Your Commission is in an unusual circumstance as well. Due to unexpected turnover, we have three open slots on the Commission. In addition, I am the remaining elected Officer, and the only member who has served on the Commission for more than a month or two.

So part of this evening's meeting is handling annual housekeeping, part is reconstituting our membership, and part is bringing a new crew up to speed.

Discussion of how public may view prior minutes. March 8 minutes read aloud.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by E. Livingstone, seconded by M. Hobbs to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2021 meeting.

Motion carried by roll call vote, Troy Merner abstaining.

Minutes signed by Christie and Livingstone.

PERMITS, APPLICATIONS AND DES MATTERS:

Christie presented background and timing of an "Eversource D142 Line Rebuild-Lancaster" action request from Stantec Engineers/Eversource. He said he was asked by them to state that the LCC would waive local permittee award of project Mitigation Funds, by April 16, 2021. He sought more information for the Commission.

As stated, the question before the LCC at this meeting was whether we would agree to sign off by next Thursday, giving up our right to receive about \$7700 dollars.

Christie told the meeting that he 1. Could not act without LCC approval, 2. LCC had been provided no written information and that 3. The sign-off request could not be accommodated within the requested time frame. He said that he had contacted the Town Manager and the Whitefield and Northumberland Conservation Commissions.

Christie also explained that the scope of the LCC's purview in this matter as being limited to wetlands matters, and that any discussion before this meeting would be so limited.

Appointments:

Linda Upham-Bornstein, Ph.D., re: "Eversource D142 Line Rebuild-Lancaster" permitting, requesting a delay in the decision process until such time as more information is provided regarding the process. She distributed a list of 12 Questions related to decision process, requesting written answers from Eversource to the questions, and expressed concern about the effects of the project on the fragile wetlands. Troy Merner stated that as State Representative, he had been notified last summer. Ben Oleson, Town Manager, stated that the Town received a letter from Eversource last December, stating that they were preparing a project. Oleson further stated that Eversource 'scheduled a

meeting several weeks ago, and that meeting took place on Tuesday, April 6. With Eversource, himself, and two Northumberland Town officials. Much discussion began.

Christie intervened thrice to redirect the discussion to the specific question of delaying response on waiving Permittee Mitigation Funds.

MOTION:

E. Livingston moved, Second by M. Hobbs as follows: “Lancaster Conservation Commission shall postpone response to Stantec Engineering’s request to forego local Permittee Wetlands Mitigation Funds associated with the “Everource D142 Line Rebuild-Lancaster” project pending receipt of application documents, consultation with stakeholders, and time to obtain advice.”

Motion Carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Select board Report: T. Merner: (present: his first meeting.)

OTHER BUSINESS:

Treasurer’s Report – R Christie: The LCC-recommended Budget was accepted by Town Meeting. 98% funds remaining: Explained Scholarship, equipment. Christie requested reimbursement for expenses:

Motion:

Moved by M. Hobbs, E. Livingstone Second: To Reimburse Rob Christie for Commission Laptop Mouse purchase (\$9.99) and Zoom License Upgrade (\$149.90).

Motion Carried by unanimous roll call vote. R. Christie abstaining.

Calendar and Planning Cycle: Christie explained ‘First Meeting’ activities (Scheduling year’s activities and tasks), would be deferred to May meeting when full Commission was in place.

Resignations received: Allan Ryder, (Chair, term ending 2022), Allan Carr, re-appointed then resigned, term ending 2024)

Nomination recommendations: Agreement with Selectboard is that LCC will review and nominate candidates for Selectboard appointment, to be presented at the April 19, 2021 Selectboard meeting. Discussed LCC Officers per our Rules and Procedures. Open member terms are (1) for one year (2022), and (2) for three years (2024).

Christie outlined backgrounds, and read brief synopses of, Letters of interest submitted by Candidates Nancy Southworth, Racheal Stuart and Kathy Jean Lavoie.

Christie asked for further Indications of interest from the public, citing many interesting tasks in which to participate.

Motion:

Moved by Christie, Hobbs Second: that Nancy Southworth, Racheal Stuart, and Kathy Jean Lavoie be nominated for appointment by The Lancaster Selectboard, to the Lancaster Conservation Commission.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Christie asks: “anything from public?”

Peter Riviere: If meeting with Eversource is set up per Merner comment, will that be an LCC meeting, or broader?

Christie: Broader. LCC is interested in facilitating process but purview at this meeting is limited to Wetlands issues and Stantec Engineering’s request to decline permittee Mitigation funds.

States Stantec communication to him April 7th was also addressed to Town Manager Ben Gaetjens-Oleson. Oleson said that meeting to present conceptual plans was held on April 6th among Eversource, Oleson(Lancaster) and Becky Craggy and Jim Weagle (Groveton/Northumberland). Christie stated he has contacted Northumberland and Whitefield Conservation Commissions to coordinate.

Troy Merner: Commented generally on what he understands Eversource’s Project plans to be.

L. Upham-Bornstein: Comments on Eversource/Northern Pass past process faults.

Merner: Comments on Eversource processes. Offers to facilitate meetings.

Christie: Has heard favorable comments from Jefferson CC (D. Govatski) regarding Eversource accommodating wetlands and sensitive Pondicherry wildlife.

Hears concerns from public about possible “Northern Pass” resurgence.

R. More: Concern is lack of specificity to date about Project. Requests more specificity from Town.

Housekeeping motions:

FINANCIAL REPORT:

E. Livingston Moves, M. Hobbs second, to accept the financial report

Motion carried by roll call vote, T. Merner abstained.

THANKS LETTERS TO FORMER MEMBERS:

E. Livingston motion, M. Hobbs second, to write thank-you letters to Allan Ryder, Allan Carr Don Frenette and Kim Votta for their service to the Lancaster Conservation Commission. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

MEETING TIME CHANGE:

Christie moves, Livingston seconds Change meeting time to 7 pm. Motion tabled, on suggestion of Town Manager, until full board is appointed. Motion tabled by unanimous roll-call vote.

Motion to Adjourn:

E. Livingstone motion, M. Hobbs second to adjourn meeting. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:20:38 PM.

APPROVED May 10, 2021

Rob Christie (ACTING CHAIR)

Margaret Hobbs (Commission member)