

**NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 15, 2023**

Members Present: Charles Page, David Krause and Anthony Pucci.

Members Absent: Heather Durgin, Mark Chaffee.

Alternate Members Present: None.

Others Present: Nicole Martin, Environmental Specialist VHB: Ashley Friend, Licensing & Permitting Specialist Eversource.

Charles Page acting as Chair opened the meeting at 7:00 pm with introductions.

Minutes –Page/Pucci moved and seconded to approve the draft minutes of the December 21, 2022, meeting. - Motion passed with 2 votes in favor and 1 abstention.

VHB Inc – Eversource Transmission Line Project – Commission members welcomed Nicole Martin from VHB and Ashley Friend from Eversource for the purpose of discussing and explaining the transmission line project scheduled to start this summer on electric transmission lines running from Franklin to Concord and that travel through a portion of Northfield. They summarized the project as a replacement of all existing wooden poles with weathered steel poles. Replacement of conductors and ceramic insulators and installation of updated grounding wires. The project will require crossing some wetlands utilizing timber mats. They explained the mitigation strategies planned to minimize impact to wetlands including streams and vernal pools (no vernal pools were identified within the boundaries of Northfield), and the survey work completed and to be undertaken to identify rare plant species. They described an open issue relating to certain white pines within a right of way that have been planted by a landowner and are now close to impacting the electric lines. These trees will need to be removed and the landowner will be notified.

Commission members asked several questions relating to the mitigation plans, length of project, comments/concerns received from other towns or landowners and notification process used to make abutters aware. Martin and Friend responded to all questions posed. General discussion ensued and the Commission requested that copies of the letters used to notify landowners/abutters be sent to the Town for reference purposes. The members will review these at our June meeting. After some further general discussion Ms. Martin and Ms. Friend left the meeting

Silver Lake Dam Project – Request from Tilton Conservation Commission (TCC) for a Joint Meeting.

The members discussed the recent NH DES meeting held to review a request from Silver Lake Association for a study to dredge part of the Winnepesaukee River and construct a dam along route 140. The meeting was put on by representatives from NH DES, including Assistant Commissioner, Mark Sanborn and staff from DES Water Division and DES Dam Bureau. Commission members, Krause, Page and Pucci were all in attendance via Zoom connections. DES shared with those present, the dynamics, logistics and potential impacts of a project of this scope and in the end informed those in attendance that they would not be recommending moving forward with this project.

Members continued discussion relating to a request from, TCC for a joint meeting to discuss the dam project as well as the Winnepesaukee River embankment replacement along route 3 between Cumberland Farms and Salmon Run Conservation Area. After some discussion it was agreed that Tony would reach out to TCC and coordinate a potential meeting time as well as an agenda and communicate with our Town Asst. Admin. to give appropriate notice of the meeting.

Meghan Wimsatt- request to utilize Knowles Pond for testing during June/July

Members discussed the request from Ms. Wimsatt to conduct testing at Knowles Pond. Ms. Wimsatt is an accelerated masters student at UNH and this testing will aid her research in her area of undergraduate study. Her testing involves the placement of 3 bubble traps in the same general area, near shore in 4-9 feet of water. The traps consist of a weight/anchor attached to a float on which is mounted an inverted funnel that collects bubbles emitted from the sediments of the pond. She will install the traps in early June and visit them once a week for three more weeks to collect the samples. On the final week of collection she will remove the traps. It was noted that both Charlie and Tony have been in contact with Ms. Wimsatt and either or both will work with her on this. It was also agreed to write a brief article for publication in the May and June Conservation News regarding this to make the public aware.

“Conservation Corner” for the Northfield News – After discussion it was agreed that Charlie would work up an article for April and Tony would draft an article relating to the aforementioned testing for use in May and June.

Trail/Conservation Properties update – Charlie reported that an abutter to the Richard Smart Conservation Area has complained about people using the trail and not policing their dogs resulting in dog fouling on his property. Charlie worked with the Town to produce and install signs making users of the trail aware of the Town’s ordinance relating to dog walking. He also reported that several large trees on the Sotir property were removed prior to the heavy snows.

Other Business – The members discussed the issue of trout stocking and noted that Fish and Game would continue stocking unless they were advised by the Commission to cease. There have been no formal complaints made to the Commission regarding the stocking of the pond. We believe there has been some informal chatter/discussion amongst and between residents in the area concerning the risk of increased parking problems and use of the pond. It was noted that the parking problems experienced at the pond appear to be similar to previous years prior to stocking.

Members discussed the election of officers. Charlie suggested that we start an annual rotation of officers so that no one individual is saddled with any specific duty forever. This will be discussed at our June meeting.

Adjournment – There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Minutes approved May 17, 2023