

# TOWN OF FITZWILLIAM

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

### MINUTES

**Monday, June 15, 2020**  
**7:00 PM**

*Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Conservation Commission met remotely via phone/video conferencing, as allowed under NH Executive Order 2020-04, Emergency Order #12.*

**Members Present:** Paul Kotila, Hiel Lindquist, Beth Vanney, Kevin Woolley, and Susan Silverman

**Members Absent:** Cheryl Norskey and Dorothy Zug

**Guests Present:** Pat English (applicant)

Mr. Kotila called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

#### **PRIMARY:**

#### **Consultation – Thomas Anderson – Construction of a porch within the WPOD**

Chairman Kotila opened the meeting by asking the Commission for any questions, thoughts, or concerns in regards to the site walk conducted on May 22. Beth Vanney commented that the walkway could be improved to be more impervious. Mr. Kotila explained that this was installed by the previous owner. Susan Silverman added that the DES received complaints. She mentioned the builder was open to installing gutters. However, the lack of vegetation is worse for run-off.

Mr. Kotila added the lot is heavily impervious containing a residence and a large garage with a walkway around the house. He explained to Commission that the ZBA is involved with case due to set-back requirements. The porch will be doubled in size and is just within the 75 foot set-back, but the addition puts it outside the set-back. The porch addition does not affect things too much and will not be a major contributor.

The LUC then updated the Commission on the status of the case with the ZBA and Planning Board. At this time, it was decided that Mr. Kotila would represent the Commission at the Planning Board meeting.

Ms. Vanney asked if there are any issues with there being no vegetation along the shoreland. Mr. Kotila explained that he cannot comment as this is handled through the state. Mrs. Silverman added that this is also a problem on the other side of the lake. The tree removal was caught by the current owners. She felt CC approval should be pursuant to planting vegetation to rectify the run-off situation. She also felt the walkway created issues. Though Laurel Lake is small, the Town must make a strong statement about the rules. The DES complaints must be addressed – especially if plantings were not done. The Town needs to ask for compliance. Ms. Vanney added the Lake lacks a wildlife corridor, especially on the east side, and the ability to stop the run-off is a problem.

Pat English, the applicant's representative, explained that to his knowledge, all DES complaints have been resolved. Ms. Vanney asked if that included the vegetation plantings. Mr. English replied in the affirmative stating that according to Paul Grasewicz, who did work for the previous owner, it was resolved with the planting grid. The Commission as a whole is concerned if the vegetation plan was followed.

It was requested that the LUC send to the Commission all DES documents.

Hiel Lindquist felt the Commission should condition any approval that any DES violations are resolved.

The Commission agreed that Mr. Kotila will relay the following to the Planning Board. It is the Conservation Commission understanding that all DES complaints have been resolved. The lot has a high impervious factor, and with the small porch added, some mitigation is needed. The Commission will also remind the Planning Board that for the past three years, the phosphorus and algae levels in the summer have increased. Prior to that, the water quality had remained stable for 10 years.

Ms. Vanney requested that the Commission be specific to ensure that requirements have been met or completed. Mr. Kotila indicated he is not comfortable requiring specific numbers, in regards to plantings, etc. Mr. English relayed that he is willing to install gutter in the front of the deck, which would run into a gravel pit. Mrs. Silverman further commented that this is not just about gutters. This is an opportunity to bring the property into compliance and reduce the run-off into the lake. The lake conditions are at a tipping point and are shifting, which includes water clarity.

At this time, Mr. Kotila thanked Mr. English for his time, and Mr. English leaves the meeting.

Ms. Vanney asked if the Commission could speak with the residents of the lake, perhaps through a HOA community meeting. Ms. Vanney further suggested an educational campaign to incentivize solutions like gutter installation with maybe a coupon program. Mrs. Silverman explained that all events have been cancelled due to COVID-19 but the Laurel Lake Association is very aware of the issues and have worked hard to educate people. It is hard when people want to do what they want, like planting grass to the edge of the lake. The Commission can only deal with things on a case by case basis. Mr. Kotila concluded the discussion adding that it is a good thing there is no vegetation in the lake, most likely allowing the lake to be the cleanest lake in town.

#### **Approval of Meeting Minutes: May 20, 2020**

After a brief discussion and minor edits, Mr. Lindquist motioned to accept the minutes with amendments. Mr. Woolley seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Yes: 5 [Kotila, Lindquist, Vanney, Woolley, Silverman]; No: 0; Abstained: 0

#### **ON-GOING BUSINESS:**

**Matt Buonomano property:** Mr. Kotila met with the Board of Selectmen on June 28. At this time, the BoS is reluctant to spending money now as they have concerns about tax receipts and the impact on cash flow because of COVID-19. It was agreed that the Conservation Commission would withhold the appraisal request until September to allow time to assess the situation. Mr. Buonomano is not in a rush to sell and Mr. Kotila felt the delay is acceptable.

Mr. Lindquist asked if the BoS is in favor of a warrant article. Mr. Kotila was unsure as he did not pursue that question. Mrs. Silverman felt we are a long way away from a warrant article being finalized and this should be revisited in September. Mr. Woolley and Mr. Lindquist agreed as well. Ms. Vanney felt this makes sense to delay but we cannot move forward without an appraisal.

The Commission then agreed to delay until September. Mr. Kotila will update Mr. Buonomano.

**Budget Report:** Expenses (including payroll) as of May 13, 2020

The commission agreed that expenses are in line and no further discussion was needed.

**Dog Waste Cleanup Bags:** Mr. Lindquist relayed that usage is way down.

**Tree removal at Town Hall and Library:** Ms. Vanney updated the Commission that the olive tree at the Town Hall will be taken down. She also relayed that it appeared that some work had been done at the library, maybe not according to our plan, but she will need to check it out more.

**Monadnock Advisory Committee:** Mr. Lindquist had not met with them yet. There is no updated schedule available at this time.

Mr. Kotila asked about the park situation. Mr. Lindquist said that individuals need to make an appointment/reservation to gain entry into both the headquarters and the Old Toll Road.

**Widow Gage Trail:** Mr. Lindquist relayed he walked the Blue Trail and all is fine. A Richmond resident had written an article in their newsletter – the Rooster – about the Widow Gage trail. He assisted her by providing background information. Mr. Lindquist agreed to send the article with the Commission.

**New Business:**

The LUC updated the Commission on any cases that may be in the pipeline and the ordinances review with the Planning Board.

Mrs. Silverman requested that the Commission speak with the Planning Board about designating more prime wetlands to the list. She felt Scott Brook and the Royalston Road marsh – the largest aquifer in town – should be added at a minimum; though she thought about 5 additions are needed which include connecting wetlands. Mr. Kotila agreed and stated that the Natural Resource manual is over 10 years old and needs updating. There is a linkage between wetlands and natural resources. Mrs. Silverman suggested forming a sub-group with a member from the BoS, Planning Board, and Conservation to present a draft to the groups as a whole.

There being no further business, Mr. Lindquist motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Vanney seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:01pm.

Yes: 5 [Kotila, Lindquist, Vanney, Woolley, Silverman]; No: 0; Abstained: 0

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Nolan  
Land Use Coordinator

**Minutes approved as written on July 20, 2020**