

DRAFT

**MINUTES OF THE  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**MEETING OF  
August 2, 2023**

A meeting of the Conservation Commission was held on August 2, 2023 in the Knightly Meeting Room, at Salem Town Hall.

**PRESENT:** Ruth Tanner Isaks, Chairman; Keith Stramaglia, Town Council Rep; Linda Harvey; Glen Edwards, Alternate; Caitlin Fitzpatrick, Alternate; and Crayton Brubaker, Community Development Program Manager.

The meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Isaks introduced the commission members.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- 1. NEW HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION COMMISSIONS (NHACC) - Presentation from Paul Wainwright, Member of Board of Directors for NHACC and Chair of Atkinson Conservation Commission.

Paul Wainwright said it is good to meet other Conservation Commission members. In addition to being Chair of the Conservation Commission in Atkinson, he is a newly elected member of the Board of Directors of NHACC. Being new to the Board, he doesn't have a lot of information yet. The NHACC is primarily an educational non-profit that supports the State's Conservation Commissions through education and advocacy for various laws going through Concord. Every year, there is an annual conference, and that is always the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in November. It has been in Pembroke the last couple of years. It is a really great way to get commission members educated. In Atkinson, he makes it almost a requirement that members go, and he has part of his budget for the tuition. He will attempt to get information about the conference to the Salem Conservation Commission soon. He is quite familiar with a photo contest that the NHACC is doing this year. He is the administrator of that contest. The reason for the contest is to get members of the community engaged with your open spaces in this Town. The NHACC is looking for photos that would inspire people to want to save open spaces. The theme is water, wetlands, and wildlife. If one's photo contains at least one of those three, it qualifies. There is substantial prize money, and there are 3 categories. The categories are adults ages 19 and up; teens ages 13-18; and kids ages 12 and under. In each of those categories, the first-place prize is \$250. This is a good motivation, and it is a great opportunity for kids to enjoy nature and conservation lands. The contest is open until September 8<sup>th</sup>. On the NHACC website, there is a link to enter. The website is NHACC.org. There is a \$10 fee to pay for the web service. It's a great opportunity to potentially some money, but also you get the photos that not only NHACC

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1 can use, but the Town will get photos that people submitted in Salem. Mr. Wainwright expressed  
2 that he wants to learn how NHACC can better serve the Salem Conservation Commission, and  
3 what are the biggest problems that the Salem Conservation Commission faces? Perhaps,  
4 NHACC can get better training available for you.

5  
6 Chairman Isaks asked, can you indicate what the NHACC sees as principal issues for us, for the  
7 various conservation commissions?

8 Mr. Wainwright said the NHACC is very aware for the need for affordable housing. There is  
9 some friction that says its contrary to conservation. That's not true. It is possible to have both.  
10 One of the breakout sessions at the upcoming conference may be on how to have both  
11 conservation and affordable housing. That is an issue in Atkinson now. There is little land left to  
12 build on. It is difficult to balance the limited land and items related to zoning. You can't just tell  
13 a builder to build affordable housing, you must incentivize it. The most profit is building large  
14 houses on large lots. NHACC may have a training class on that subject.

15  
16 Mrs. Harvey asked, are you aware of any legislative action taking place at all with respect to  
17 wetland issues?

18 Mr. Wainwright said he reads the monthly newsletter. There is a committee called the  
19 Legislative Committee. They summarize what is coming up. He can't remember any immediate  
20 issues before the legislature in Concord. He will get you the most recent copy of the newsletter.

21 Chairman Isaks asked, are there other issues that will be sort of looked at, any major issues for  
22 the NHACC?

23 Mr. Wainwright said, not that he is aware of, but he is new on the Board.

24 Chairman Isaks said, for the photo contest, she assumes something will be published. How will  
25 that be arranged?

26 Mr. Wainwright said that the NHACC will present awards by age category. There are not many  
27 restrictions in place. Although, if someone mentions that a photo is on conserved land, that will  
28 be part of the description that goes with the photo. At first, he only wanted it on conserved land  
29 but there were several that felt there is value in conserving your own backyard. So, it is not  
30 restricted to Town conservation land.

31  
32 Chairman Isaks asked, if there are workshops that we'd like to see done at the next meeting, who  
33 do we contact and are there any categories that we need to look at?

34 Mr. Wainwright said, the workshops will probably be like past years. There will be a  
35 'Conservation Commission 101' class for new members. There was a wetlands training program  
36 done this past spring. There may be wetlands training derived from that at the conference. He  
37 knows you haven't been getting the NHACC email. So, he will try to correct that and make sure  
38 you are on the mailing list. You can always email him. Crayton has his email. Mr. Wainwright  
39 said that it is great to be here and anyone on the Commission can feel free to contact him. He  
40 will try to improve communications from NHACC to you.

41  
42 Chairman Isaks asked, does the Board of Directors for New Hampshire have any kind of joint  
43 meetings with ones from Vermont, Maine, etc?

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1 Mr. Wainwright said he is not aware that there are similar organizations in other states. We are  
2 not part of the State government; NHACC is a non-profit. He will raise that with the Board.  
3 Chairman Isaks said, several of the issues that come before Fish & Game Commission, involve  
4 Vermont, Maine, New York state and a lot of their considerations are made with respect to the  
5 policies of these states. She didn't know if the Conservation Commissions had a relationship.  
6 Mr. Wainwright said he is not aware of that, but he will find out.

7  
8 Chairman Isaks thanked Paul for coming. The next order of business, for the Town of Salem,  
9 that request was withdrawn for this meeting, but it will be back on our agenda for September.  
10 There was a site walk for that. The question is, since the attendance was a little low, if we should  
11 repeat that site walk. The materials Crayton provided were substantial and descriptive. At the site  
12 walk on Saturday, it appeared that the issue was straight forward. The scheduled September site  
13 walk would be on the Saturday of the holiday. Chairman Isaks suggested that we not repeat that  
14 at that time because of the availability of the Commission and the representatives of the  
15 organization. She suggested that we not have a site walk in September and that if you want to go  
16 out and look at the area, if you haven't already, you take it at your leisure.

**OTHER COMMISSION BUSINESS**17  
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19  
20 1. Review of Minutes

21  
22 **MOTION by Mr. Edwards to approve the minutes of July 5, 2023 as printed.**  
23 **SECOND by Ms. Fitzpatrick.**

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25 **VOTE ON MOTION: 4 – 0 -1 (Mr. Stramaglia abstained.)**  
26

## 27 2. Town Forest

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29 Mr. Edwards said, in terms of trail maintenance, while clearing brush, volunteer Claudia Defuria  
30 came upon a downed tree. He contacted Mike Bolduc who cleared the tree. Glen showed pictures  
31 of the area. He thanked both Ms. Defuria and Mr. Bolduc for their help. Regarding the drainage  
32 pipes, he had GPS'd all the drainage pipes. There are 6 underneath Trail A. He got those GPS  
33 coordinates to the GIS Manager for the Town, and he put them into the Town's drainage system.  
34 This will prove useful in the future.

35 Chairman Isaks asked, are they for water drainage?

36 Mr. Edwards said yes. It is all water drainage and keeps Trail A dry except for one spot.

37 Chairman Isaks asked, where are the pipes from?

38 Mr. Edwards said that some are from before he was on the Commission, and a couple were  
39 added when Mr. Klemarczyk had to address flooding down Trail F.

40 Chairman Isaks asked, it is not drainage from outside the forest area?

41 Mr. Edwards said no. For the most part these are small drainage areas. The pipes are generally  
42 not over 12 inches in diameter. At the last meeting, we discussed Town Forest clean up.

43 Chairman Isaks brought up a good point. We were going to have it the weekend of the 29<sup>th</sup>, but if  
44 we have site visits it could interfere so he suggested October 21<sup>st</sup>, with a rain date of October

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1 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9 am – 12pm. We like volunteers from the community to be involved and we clean up  
2 trash and clear brush. We may rake out culverts. It will be during foliage.  
3 Mrs. Harvey said you should wear blaze orange because that is hunting season.  
4 Chairman Isaks asked, is there publicity for it?  
5 Mr. Edwards said, the staff puts it in the Salem Patch and on the website.  
6 Chairman Isaks suggested the Salem Life paper.  
7 Mr. Stramaglia said you may want to try the new Communications Committee for this. Their job  
8 is to put stuff out for the Town.  
9 Chairman Isaks asked, who is the Chair of the Communications Committee?  
10 Mr. Brubaker said that Kelly Moss is the Chair, and he is the staff liaison to that committee also.  
11 Mrs. Harvey also suggested the Recreation Committee put it in their announcements.  
12 Mr. Stramaglia said he is on the Recreation Committee, so he will do that.  
13  
14 Mr. Edwards said a big issue out there is the plexiglass on two kiosks. One is broken and the  
15 other is difficult to see through. At the last meeting, he requested Mr. Brubaker contact Roy  
16 Sorenson.  
17 Mr. Brubaker said he spoke with Mr. Sorenson, and he was getting quotes for that. Once Mr.  
18 Brubaker gets that information, we can assess it.  
19 Mr. Edwards said we spoke about flooding on Trails L and A. He discussed the problems on  
20 Trail A. There is a bridge and the water pools there and it is difficult to get around it. We talked  
21 about Trail L flooding. That has become worse. He took a photo of it today. We need to have  
22 some sort of signage put up at a couple of key points. He suggested where to put the signs. It is  
23 midway on the trail. At this point when you get there, you must turn around. He would be  
24 available to put signs out there when they are ready.  
25 Mr. Brubaker said he will speak with Mr. Sorenson about those signs.  
26 Mrs. Harvey said, the entrance to the bridge, it has been a problem for a lot of years and the way  
27 we resolved it in the past was, DPW would dump stone out there, and we'd spread it out. That  
28 also leveled the ground with the bridge to make it more accessible for wheelchairs. We may need  
29 another load of that. It's the bridge at the parking area.  
30 Mr. Edwards said he is talking about the one in the forest halfway up Trail A. The one that Mr.  
31 Klemarczyk designed.  
32 Mrs. Harvey asked, would stone help?  
33 Mr. Edwards said it is a good size pond. He also mentioned Trail F.  
34 Mrs. Harvey said its Trails F, A, and L.  
35 Mr. Edwards asked Mr. Brubaker if he was able to get in touch with the town forester.  
36 Mr. Brubaker said he has not gotten in touch with him.  
37 Mr. Edwards said he would send Mr. Brubaker a picture of Trail L and he asked Mr. Brubaker to  
38 forward that to Mr. Klemarczyk. In terms of the trail, that trail basically must be discontinued for  
39 the time being.  
40 Mrs. Harvey suggested that maybe we need three bridges.  
41 Mr. Edwards mentioned the cost.  
42 Mrs. Harvey said we may be able to get some grants.  
43 Mr. Edwards said it will be a major undertaking. The new lot we bought in the middle of the  
44 town forest, has Southeast Land Trust been included in the restriction on that?

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1 Mr. Brubaker said, not yet but we are working on it. We haven't started the discussions on that,  
2 but once we get the report back from them, we plan on incorporating that deed.

3  
4 Mr. Edward said, September 1<sup>st</sup> is hunting season. Last year DPW put up postings. He discussed  
5 where those were. Those need to be up before September 1<sup>st</sup>.

6 Mr. Brubaker said he will work with Roy and get those up.

7  
8 Mr. Stramaglia asked, are we in charge of Valentine Park? The fence along the Spicket River, he  
9 spoke to DPW already, but someone cut the fence and kids are going into the water. He is  
10 wondering if someone can tell Roy to close the fence back up.

11 Mr. Brubaker said he will talk to Mr. Sorenson.

12 Chairman Isaks said that Georgia has been working on that.

13 Ms. Fitzpatrick said that she will send Georgia a message.

14  
15 3. Conservation Fund Report

16  
17 Mrs. Harvey said, in June we had interest of \$6,478.50. We have no expenses or other income.  
18 The total of the three accounts of \$1,683,806.68. Mrs. Harvey asked Mr. Brubaker if he has been  
19 able to do anything with following up on the actual properties that were converted from open  
20 space to development that we got the land use change tax on?

21 Mr. Brubaker said no. For what month?

22 Mrs. Harvey said, the land use change tax. There was a large one in May. That one was \$7,000.  
23 There were two from 2022 that when she went through the documents, she couldn't match  
24 amounts that were supposed to be deposited, with the actual amount that did get deposited. She  
25 needs all the backup for 2022, expenses and income, but specifically for the land use change tax  
26 forms that go with the actual deposits. She got what Jacob found, and what she had didn't match  
27 any deposits.

28 Mr. Brubaker said he will work with Finance on that.

29 Mrs. Harvey said, the backup for everything in 2023, we should also have.

30 Mr. Brubaker said he started keeping backup for everything from when he started, and he will  
31 work backwards.

32 Mrs. Harvey said, whatever the land use change tax that was deposited in May, that form should  
33 be part of that backup. She doesn't know what that is.

34  
35 4. Conservation Commission Goals

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37 Chairman Isaks asked if there are any updates. She hasn't seen much about butterflies.

38 Mrs. Harvey said she hadn't seen any butterflies.

39 Mr. Stramaglia said he has tons of them. He has rose bushes that are loaded with them.

40 Mrs. Harvey said she will dig the milkweeds up from her house and transplant them somewhere  
41 else where there are butterflies. We have no insects. There are no insects or birds.

42 Mr. Stramaglia said in his neighborhood, they have a lot more birds than usual. He discussed the  
43 birds at his house.

44 Chairman Isaks said she has seen very few bees.

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2 There was a discussion of insects that the members have seen.

3  
4 Chairman Isaks asked when we will get the initial report from SELT.

5 Mr. Brubaker said he toured the town forest with Amanda from SELT on June 13<sup>th</sup>. They were  
6 going to have a report for this meeting but due to unforeseen circumstances, that will be pushed  
7 to the next meeting. Hopefully, the Commission can have a discussion on that and based on that  
8 discussion, he asked Amanda to prepare a presentation and come back in October or November.  
9 Chairman Isaks asked, will we have that for the September meeting?

10 Mr. Brubaker said that is his hope.

11  
12 5. Other

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14 Chairman Isaks said there is nothing scheduled.

15  
16 Mr. Brubaker said he spoke with Jacob. He will work with Finance to get the second  
17 Conservation Commission banner. He hopes to get it ordered soon. The commission received an  
18 invitation to a SELT landowner gathering and wildlife habitat walk on Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup> at  
19 5:00 p.m. in Epping. He sent an email to the Commission on July 25<sup>th</sup>, with that information. He  
20 can forward it again. The Town Council accepted a donation of \$1,500 at their July 10<sup>th</sup> meeting  
21 from Ed Hawkins. Crayton prepared a thank you note if the Commission wants to go forward  
22 with that.

23 Chairman Isaks asked if there was a letter?

24 Mr. Brubaker read the thank you letter that he wrote to Mr. Hawkins for the contribution.

25  
26 **MOTION by Mrs. Harvey to adjourn.**

27 **SECOND by Ms. Fitzpatrick.**

28  
29 **VOTE ON MOTION: 5 – 0**

30 **UNANIMOUS**

31  
32 The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

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34 Minutes by: Susan Strugnell, Conservation Commission Recording Secretary

35 Approved: Conservation Commission

36 Date: