Stoddard Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, August 28, 2019  
Time: 7:30 p.m.  
Place: Town Hall  

Members Present: (marked with XX)  
Geoff Jones__XX  
Scott Semmens__XX  
Paul Crosby__XX  
Helen Tam-Semmens__XX  
Bob Fee__XX  
Margo Santoro__XX  

1. Approved minutes of July 24, 2019.

2. Jim Newsom from Harris Center for Conservation Education presented a proposal for Stoddard Conservation Commission to hold the Deed Restriction of their recently acquired 515 acres of Granite Lake Headwaters conservation land off Rt 9. The state used to be the “Third Party Holder” or the third party right of enforcement of such Deed Restrictions, but apparently no longer. Stoddard Conservation Commission sees no issue in taking on the responsibility. Bob Fee will bring this up to the Board of Selectmen.

3. Geoff received a call from Mike Pelow about a complaint from some neighbor accusing him of wetland violation on Scenic Drive. Geoff looked into it and found no violation. Following is Geoff’s investigative report.

Inquiry: On August 2, 2019, Mike Pelow, of Alstead, called to say a neighbor was complaining that his construction of a 100 foot driveway to his Mother-in-law Diane Prentice’s property on Scenic Drive was violating the wetlands law. He described the property as being below a house with a backhoe and above a sign that said Ryder. He wanted me to see if the property had any wetlands. He says his family plans to use the property to camp on for family outings (fish, hunt, snowmobile).

Action: I told him I would drive up and take a look and get back to him today. I was able to find the property, with the 100-ft gravel driveway. There was some sensitive fern growing in the area, but probably the result
of drainage being altered by abutting neighbor, but no standing water or any sign of perennial or intermittent streams.

I checked the NWI and soils maps in ARCMAP and all the soils in the area were well-drained, no indication of any hydric soils.

After making the same day field visit and checking out the map information, I called Mike to tell him he should be OK and that if his neighbor continued to harass him to let us know.

Geoff Jones, chair SCC

4. To follow up on last meeting’s discussion of Geoff responded to John Lightbody’s call and verified that there is extensive land clearing down to water’s edge on Carr Avenue (at junction of St. Nicholas Dr) ... The issue has since been reported to NHDES. And NHDES has written to landowner Mr. Madore in a letter dating 7-23-19 that a shoreland permit is required prior to removing vegetation beyond permissible limits.

5. Reviewed application for shoreland permit for 52 North Circle (West side of Highland Lake opposite the Marina).
6. Geoff brought up an incident on Highland Lake that he and some others witnessed on
8-16-19, of some boys on motor boats apparently aiming to run over a loon chick and
adults. Following is his report.

A jet ski with 2 riders (red track) pulled a tube with one rider
(dashed blue line) approached the
family of 3 loons (blue dots) ~ one
chick and 2 adults.

They came from the north: the
first pass split one adult from the
other adult and chick, made a
sharp 360° turn to the left with
the tube passing over the adult
and chick, continuing the turn,
they aimed directly for the other
adult, it dove under just before
they would have hit it.

They continued the turn for a 2nd
time, aiming for the chick and
other adult, with the tube passing
over their spot. They continued
north.

All three loons were seen after
the incident and appeared OK.
This action appeared to be
deliberate.

At approximately 7:50 pm, riding on a friends pontoon boat, we caught up
with the individuals a short distance from the Merriwoode Camps. I got
this bow number off their Jet Ski: NY4135GC

The three boys refused to give their names or where they lived; at first
they denied the incident. When I told them 4 adults witnessed them, the
fella on the tube said it was an “accident” and they “didn’t mean it!”

The incident has been reported to NH Fish and Game. Upon discussion, Geoff said he
will contact the lake associations in town to be vigilant about future incidences. It is
illegal to harass loons in NH as they are protected species. Loon Preservation
Committee in NH indicates that “boats should slow in the vicinity of loons and stop at
least 150 feet away”.

The incident occurred on Friday,
August 16,
approximately 7:15
pm, Highland Lake,
Stoddard, NH
Bob Fee suggested that notices about fines for loon harassment can be put on “no wake” signs on the lakes as well as boat launch areas. Geoff will contact Loon Preservation Committee for possible signage and handouts and advice.

7. Discussed legislation to ban wildlife killing contests in NH. Some pointed out that such wildlife killing contests are against the principles of “no wanton waste” that NH Fish and Game upholds, as the animals are typically wantonly disposed of as trash and not used. Some others pointed out studies showing the importance of predators such as coyotes to our ecosystem, and the need to build resilience to our ecosystem in light of the 6th Mass Species Extinction that is going on right now, by not wasting our wildlife such as in wildlife killing contests.

Bob Fee said that he did not see a lot of entries into one of the coyote killing contests, and so doesn’t see the killing contests as a problem, although he does not support the killing contests personally. Scott said that not having a lot of entries does not make it right either. Besides, there could be a lot more killings beyond the entries.

Stoddard Conservation Commission, like many other town Conservation Commissions in NH, had voted to stand on certain issues for the sake of conservation in NH before. No action is needed at this point. We may revisit this legislation in the future.

8. Bob Fee was asked to shed some light on recent Board of Selectmen minutes about their initial rejection of Margo Santoro as Conservation Commission member, but later reversed the decision. Bob Fee clarified that an email from the chair of the Conservation Commission such as the one written by Geoff for Margo is adequate. No need for the candidate to write a letter of intent to the Selectmen.

9. NHACC Annual Meeting to take place on Nov. 2, 2019 at Pembroke Academy. Helen will send info to new Conservation Commission members who may be interested in attending.

10. Next Meeting to be on Sept 25th, 2019, 7:30 at the town hall.