

FINAL

**LEBANON CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Remote Via Microsoft Teams  
[LebanonNH.gov/Live](https://lebanonnh.gov/live)  
Thursday, October 10, 2024  
6:30 PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sarah Riley (Chair), Bruce James, (Vice Chair), Susan Almy (Alt), Erling Heistad, Barbara Hirai, Chris Johnson, Donald Lacey, Ernst Oidtmann

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Sean Dittrich (Alt.), Brandon Hill (Alt)

**STAFF PRESENT:** Mark Goodwin (GIS Coordinator)

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**1. CALL TO ORDER – Chair Riley called the meeting to order at 6:33PM**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

*Donald Lacey MOVED to approve September 12, 2024 Minutes as amended. The motion was Seconded by Erling Heistad.*

**Amendments:**

Page 1, line 7 should be approval of the minutes from August 8, not May 9<sup>th</sup>.

Page 2 places in the minutes where Barrows is continued to be misspelled. The correct spelling is Barrows.

Page 4, line 7 change Bill parcel to Mill parcel

Page 4, line 31, drop the final e in the name Linell

Page 5, lines 20 and 21 – strike and replace with “Chair Riley would like to talk with Ms. Almy regarding environmental justice issues at the state level

Page 6, line 3,4, strike and replace with “a link to a video on the water quality certification process associated with the licensing of the Wilder Dam”.

Page 6, strike lines 6&7 and replace with “Chair Riley said that DES approved the permit by notification for the City to install monitoring wells for the alternative drinking water project at these locations:”

Page 6, line 18, should read “Green the Ground”

*\* The Vote on the MOTION was approved (8-0).*

**3. OPEN TO PUBLIC:**

A. No one from the public spoke.

**4. PERMIT REVIEW:**

A. None

## 5. STUDY ITEMS:

### A. Discussion RE: Northern Lebanon Community Plan (NLCP)

Mr. Goodwin facilitated the review and discussion this evening with the focus on natural resources. The Conservation Commission will discuss the Strategic Goals and Recommendations prepared by VHB Strategy 1, Preservation of and Enhanced Access to Natural Resources 1.1 through 1.9 of the recommendations from VHB. The planning director will attend the next meeting to address any questions and concerns about this evening's meeting.

Mr. Goodwin prepared a working document that isolated the items related to natural resources (1.1-1.9) starting with the wildlife corridor as this has the most action items within the plan. Mr. Goodwin has worked on this wildlife corridor in this area for the past 22 years, and clearly the City of Lebanon planning has made a positive difference here. Mr. Goodwin stated that the connection to the three crossing locations has for the most part been accomplished. It is the connection from the eastern crossing to Signal Hill where the gap exists. He would like the Conservation Committee to look at each item, and consider:

Do we understand what this document is asking for?

Do we agree with it?

Do we modify it?

Do we start fresh?

Action items discussed today:

#### 1.1

Strategic goals and recommendations (pg. 30 & 31): The first recommendation is to formalize maps; what is meant by "formalize map"? Efforts should continue to reflect preserving wildlife corridors (aka crossings), to allow for safe passage of black bear, moose, migratory species (aka umbrella species), etc., that allow many other species to live there. Signal Hill and Nicole Corman Nature Preserve would be ideal to connect to the current encumbered wildlife areas. Right now, these are wide open for development. Overall goal is a minimum of 1000', uninterrupted, as a "pinch point" for wildlife, which has been achieved in these areas including Rix Ledges, undeveloped currently and have about 1000' minimum corridor through there for wildlife passage. Land use perspective has been addressed in these areas.

From Rix Ledges to Etna Road, at Signal Hill, this land has all been cleared and the landowner is willing to have this as an open space which would allow for connectivity of wildlife passing.

The planning picture is missing one key piece, needing to decide where the open spaces should be to allow for corridor connectivity and Mr. Goodwin knows where this needs to be (priority conservation area in the ideal location of land currently available).

North of Timberwood is already protected 600'. When the next adjoining parcel is involved, this should allow the opportunity to further conserve closer to the 1000' requirement.

Chair Riley voiced concern about what is missing from this information in this report. She suggested they compile all the recommendations from the wildlife study as well as the NRI. Ms. Almy asked if they can require for the safe passage of wildlife.

The report does not mention the iron fence which runs down the middle of the whole strip on Mt. Support (Timberwood on right side encumbrance) and the fence goes to the bottom, so it does not allow much wildlife to get through, and therefore does not add value. Also, the fence does not provide for safety. From what is known, the fence is not a mandate but rather a *guideline* whenever there is a bank that exceeds a ratio.

Ms. Harai suggested that the fence needs to be prioritized. Mr. Lacey asked who approves fences and he thought they had an agreement at one point to take down some of the fences. Mr. Goodwin encouraged them to bring this to the Operations DPW City Manager since the Conservation Commission thinks this fence is a problem and would like to see action taken to have it removed. The Conservation Commission will include this request along with their rationale, in their communications.

Mr. Goodwin said signage will need to be a specific recommendation by this Commission and that they must establish the rationale for their recommendations. Signage needs to be put well in advance of the crossings. State roads are maintained by the State. Signage raises awareness, especially the dynamic signs.

## 1.2

Traffic calming measures (impact / around the wildlife (e.g. street trees, sidewalks, etc.) are in the document. A member asked how do you get people to comply with the current speed limits, since enforcement is the other part of traffic calming. The goal is to affect the behavior of drivers. Mr. Lacey proposed that the speed will decrease when you narrow the driving lane(s). Mr. Goodwin suggested that there might be more current options available other than decreasing speeds, and these need to be delved into.

Mr. Oidtmann suggested speed bumps as these typically help slow people down. It was agreed that the Conservation Commission should suggest this request be put in front of the experts and Mr. Goodwin said that this can fall under one of the action items that the Conservation Commission is charged with. These need to be flushed out as they are not clear. This Commission can decide on the next steps.

The plan calls for “upsizing the existing culverts” for all three wildlife corridors. Mr. Goodwin will investigate how many culverts are on 120 so if one fails, the City can make the DOT aware of these and include these in any recommendations. They will either add the wildlife study recommendations to this current study or make two different recommendations.

## 1.3

What would a public facing educational documents look like and where would these be distributed? Social media? Mass mailing? Digital billboards on SR 120? DOT needs to agree. It was also noted that some wildlife pamphlets already exist digitally.

## 1.4

Buffers of 100’ are recommended for any new development. The Conservation Commission is interested in this but agreed that more needs to be addressed since this footage seems small and perhaps arbitrary given some parcels of land abut to conservation lands. Mr. Goodwin said that each situation is different and therefore this needs to be customized for each project. Individual homes are not impacted by these rules.

Chair Riley asked if this recommendation has been presented or reviewed by other City entities, but the answer is unknown. Mr. Goodwin said that this 100’ buffer concept is solid but depends on each individual situation. Chair Riley suggested that we come up with some specific examples.

Mr. Lacey stated that the planning board has the authority to enforce these buffer rules, and if there was a sound reason, they would probably prevail.

Ms. Almy asked what “landscaping” means; this is very broad. She also stated that for the future she thinks they need to look at these properties for long term preservation.

#### 1.5

Trailhead kiosks (signage and directions) – The Conservation Committee has been adamant that there should be no hiking or biking trails, this is preservation land. Not “trailheads”. Mr. Lacey stated where trails do exist, signs should be accurate and maintained. Ms. Almy stated that their wildlife lands are becoming recreational lands so the Conservation Commission needs to think about this as she’s concerned about how much wildlife will be left, and we continue to lose the value of the conservation land.

Mr. Lacey said to be sure that there are trails for people that will have the minimal impact on wildlife. This is the goal. Mr. Oidtman thinks these lands are at risk and so we need to allow certain trails and disallow others, particularly to the biking people.

Signage is important and directional signage as well, but we need to have control over how many trails there are. Each new development cannot have trails. Chair Riley suggested bringing in New Hampshire Fish and Game and doing a workshop to help with these efforts of minimizing the impact on wildlife. Mr. Lacey also suggested closing off trails for periods of time to help the biodiversity of wildlife in these ecosystems.

#### 1.6

This recommendation is to mandate a percentage of new developments that have dedicated public open spaces such as landscape plazas, community gardens and/or pocket parks. Chair Riley said this could help keep people away from wildlife spaces. Mr. Johnson said this is a “nice to have” but would be lower on priorities that the Conservation Commission takes to the Planning Board/ short list so that Conservation Commission is heard. Ms. Riley said that what counts as open space has been addressed before. Mr. Lacey suggested the Conservation Commission coordinates with Park & Recreation so that the two complement each other’s efforts and mutually benefit.

Mr. Oidtman commented that these areas can generate a lot of trash so they should include a recommendation about these open spaces and the fact that they must be maintained.

#### 1.7

DHMC – approach about a three-parcel assemblage Chair Riley said the southern part is a part of the wetlands (north of the roundabout). The proposal is for a large community park for all three. Chair Riley suggested using what is already cleared, and to not touch these wetlands. Ms. Hirai asked where all these people would park. Chair Riley suggested a “pocket park” with the goal being zero impact or loss, on any wetlands, trees, wildlife, etc. Possibly remove this entire section or consider a small “pocket park” for pedestrians only and no parking.

#### 1.8

Future development- Chair Riley said this is missing any recommendation about a buffer. Mr. Goodwin said that these need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis, so they address which wetlands need protection. Ms. Almy asked if roads are included in this 250’ buffer recommendation. Mr. Goodwin

suggested the planning board address this matter, as he feels this has been addressed previously and this requirement already exists and e.

Chair Riley and Ms. Harai recently watched a video called Wetlands for Wildlife and has seen where at 300' buffer is a possibility. She would like to know where this 250' recommendation comes from. There is a difference between setbacks and buffers, and where you must leave vegetation - she prefers the latter. Ms. Harai suggested they learn which of these have the greatest impact.

It would be prudent to be sure each group is using the same terminology, so they are clear on the vocabulary. Chair Riley asked to discuss this with the crafter of this recommendation so that they can understand it thoroughly.

#### 1.9

Steep Slopes District is already an action item in their strategic plan.

#### B. Review of Proposed Con Com letter for the Lebanon Planning Board: Densmore Brickyard Project.

Mr. James' proposed letter highlights key issues about the Brickyard, - he has drafted a letter/the CC goal is to be at table during the process and negotiations, as this group has the expertise and knowledge and history of this area.

Mr. James suggested this letter come from the Conservation Commission rather than him, as a private citizen. He will read this letter or summarize it and provide copies to the Planning Board next Tuesday. He'll incorporate comments from this meeting into his letter. The Conservation Commission agreed that Mr. James can represent them. The Conservation Commission wants the opportunity to be involved with the Planning Board, and both could be more effective and efficient if this is done at earlier stages, particularly as relates to wetlands. The Conservation Commission is a resource, ready to help. Mr. James is an expert in this field, and is a soil scientist, an environmental chemist, and he was a Professor of Environmental Science.

Mr. Lacey also has concerns about the mining and land fill, the airport, and the big alterations of land, and about long-term needs and stressed the need for our wetlands and hillsides, like in downtown Lebanon. The exact details are unknown, but it is predicted that this area will get warmer and wetter, and we need those wetlands and hillsides to protect downslopes. There is a longer term need that needs to be addressed now.

Chair Riley also voiced her concerns about the proposed rezoning, and how this might affect water flow changes and flooding in the future. While wetlands are protected, this still is essentially turning wetlands into developed areas. She is concerned about how calculations are made now. She thinks the hillsides act as sponges, and if these are gone, what will happen, and much more might be lost than is anticipated.

Ms. Harai suggested that Mr. James documents be made available and part of the public record. He will also have hard copies for meeting attendees.

Chair Riley commented on the alteration of terrain referenced in Mr. James' letter and stated that her understanding is that while the City gets a copy, typically she thinks that the City does not comment on these. She would like to see this change. For this project, she suggested the Conservation Commission ask that both the Planning Board as well as this Conservation Commission get notified, at the very least. This would require the City Clerk to change their current procedure. Mr. James will modify the paragraph to

ask for this. To provide long term input for an ecological landscape, sustainability and resilience. This cannot be done piece by piece.

**C. Status Update & Review – 2024 Con Com Goals**

This will be discussed in next month's meeting.

**6. COMMITTEE REPORTS:** None

**7. OTHER BUSINESS:** None

**8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:** None

**9. ADJOURNMENT:**

**Mr. Heistad *MOVED* for adjournment.**

**Seconded by Ms. Hirai**

**\*The meeting was adjourned at 9:00PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Cinda Mersel

Recording Secretary