



CONSERVATION COMMISSION

AGENDA

Monday, November 21, 2022

4:30 PM

**Room 22, Parks & Recreation
Center**

Commission Members

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair
Councilor Andrew Madison, Vice Chair
Kenneth Bergman
Art Walker
Eloise Clark

Councilor Robert Williams
Brian Reilly, Alternate
Thomas P. Haynes, Alternate
Steven Bill, Alternate
John Therriault, Alternate

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 17, 2022
3. Report-outs
 - 1) Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Committee
 - 2) Outreach
 - 3) Invasive Species
 - 4) Land Conservation
 - i) 30x30 Program
 - ii) Antioch Collaborative Service Initiative Proposal
4. Discussion Items:
 - a) Conservation Commission speaking events
 - b) Airport proposed wildlife control fence
 - c) Downtown Tree Inventory
 - d) Photo library
 - e) Shared Committee Folder on Google Drive
5. New or Other Business
6. Adjourn – Next meeting date: **Monday, December 19, 2022**

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

3
4
5 CONSERVATION COMMISSION
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

Monday, October 17, 2022

4:30 PM

Room 22,
Recreation Center

Members Present:

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair
Eloise Clark
Councilor Robert Williams
Art Walker
Ken Bergman
Thomas Haynes, Alternate
Steven Bill, Alternate (Via Zoom; non-voting)
John Therriault, Alternate
Brian Reilly, Alternate (Arrived Late)

Staff Present:

Corinne Marcou, Administrative Assistant

Members Not Present:

Councilor Andrew Madison, Vice Chair

8
9 **1) Call to Order**

10
11 Chair Von Plinsky called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM. Mr. Bill stated his location and that he
12 was alone there.

13
14 **2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – September 19, 2022**

15
16 Ms. Clark echoed edits of typos submitted via email that would be corrected by Staff.

17
18 A motion by Mr. Therriault to approve the September 19, 2022 meeting minutes as amended was
19 duly seconded by Ms. Clark and the motion carried unanimously.

20
21 **3) Report-Outs**

22 **A) Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Committee**

23
24 Mr. Haynes reported that the group would meet again on October 21. The Recreation Trails
25 Grant they applied for was not awarded due to too many projects and insufficient funds, so they
26 were disappointed. There is potential money through the Parks and Recreation Trails budget for
27 that project.

30 **B) Outreach**

31
32 This group had not met recently. Mr. Haynes thanked Mr. Bill for leading the geology walk at
33 Robin Hood Park on October 14 and Ms. Clark for her assistance. There were 18 participants,
34 including some children. Chair Von Plinsky said he saw some of Ms. Clark’s beautiful photos
35 that the Director of Parks and Recreation, Andy Bohannon, would post on the Department’s
36 social media. There was a scheduled walk at the end of October to be led by Jeff Littleton, but he
37 had not corresponded with Mr. Haynes in weeks, and so the event would likely be canceled.

38
39 **C) Invasive Species**

40
41 Councilor Williams recalled the event at Robin Hood Park on Indigenous Peoples’ Day, October
42 12, with good participation of 9–10 people. They pulled a lot of Japanese knotweed from the
43 same location as last year where it had grown back, as well as some Japanese barberry. They will
44 address the knotweed again next year to hopefully get it under control. The area could benefit
45 from some shrub transplants if any Commissioners have donations.

46
47 The next event is on Veteran’s Day at 4:00 PM, where the Rail Trail meets Eastern Avenue,
48 proceeding up the trail toward town. There are a lot of invasives on that trail and Councilor
49 Williams was disheartened with what had grown back since last year.

50
51 Councilor Williams continued noting that part of the construction at the new Russell Park
52 included removing a significant portion of knotweed on the far side of Beaver Brook. They
53 planted some native replacement shrubs, and he hopes they do well, but there is some knotweed
54 coming back through them, which the City would need to keep an eye on.

55
56 Mr. Bill asked whether to bring any tools on Veteran’s Day. Councilor Williams said clippers are
57 best and suggested tools that remove roots, but no power tools. If any Commissioners have
58 shrubs from their gardens for replanting—either along Eastern Avenue or in the cemetery where
59 they addressed knotweed in June—they should contact Councilor Williams. Mr. Bill asked
60 whether mulching would help, and the Councilor said not for knotweed; black plastic would
61 work but that has environmental implications.

62
63 Mr. Therriault asked whether milkweed would work as a replacement. Councilor Williams said
64 he tried milkweed seeds last year at Robin Hood Park and said they were hit or miss. Mr.
65 Therriault was transporting milkweed, which he said if left on the ground, would be packed
66 down by the snow for germination in the spring. If there were a better propagation process,
67 Councilor Williams welcomed it because it can compete with nastier weeds. Mr. Therriault, Mr.
68 Haynes, and Mr. Bill could all contribute some.

69
70
71
72

73 **4) Discussion Items**

74 **A) Conservation Commission Speaking Events**

75

76 In Vice Chair Madison's absence, the Chair said he wanted himself and the Vice Chair to meet
77 with the Outreach working group, to milk their enthusiasm and seek their assistance to come up
78 with the first speaking event. Mr. Haynes said the next meeting would be in November, and the
79 Chair asked to be included if there is room in their schedule.

80

81 **B) Airport Proposed Wildlife Control Fences**

82

83 The Chair kept this as a placeholder. Mr. Bergman had not recently spoken with Airport Director
84 David Hickling, and there were no recent minutes on the website for the Airport Development
85 and Marketing Committee. They do have the land use planning project but that is different than
86 the fencing. Mr. Bergman still thought it useful to invite Mr. Hickling to a future meeting, which
87 the Chair agreed to prioritize so the whole Commission can ask him questions.

88

89 **C) Budget Planning**

90

91 Chair Von Plinsky reviewed the funds earmarked for the upcoming year at last month's meeting:

92 1) \$1,000 for dues to Bee City, ARLAC, and NHACC, and occasionally others like the
93 Forest Society

94 2) \$600 for outreach speakers

95 3) \$100 for invasive species project needs

96 4) \$300 for discretionary funds

97

98 The Commission had no additions or corrections.

99

100 **D) 30x30 Program**

101

102 Mr. Bill pointed this out at the last meeting. The goal is to conserve 30% of land nationally—or
103 30% of Keene—by 2030. His approximation is that Keene is 15–20% conserved, but he did not
104 know how to confirm that figure. There are a lot of Zoning and easement differences within
105 those conserved lands. The Chair suggested a working group to focus on this. Mr. Bill suggested
106 the working group could begin discussing the important nature of the habitats and the minimum
107 property sizes. He also suggested follow-up on the Surry Mountain wildlife corridor they heard
108 about from the Monadnock Conservancy. He said there was also a wetland above Beaver Brook
109 Falls that stretches RT-10 into Gilsum and he did not know its protection status. Mr. Bergman
110 said two major concepts are islands of habitat and habitat corridors, which are more restrictive
111 but provide critical connections. He thinks the Ashuelot Riverbanks serve as valuable habitats.
112 Ms. Clark thought it sounded like a reprisal of the land protection committee. Mr. Bill, Mr.
113 Bergman, and the Chair agreed to meet on November 10.

114

115

116 **E) Downtown Tree Inventory**

117
118 Mr. Haynes said he followed-up with Director Bohannon but had not heard back on the
119 inventory; he would follow-up again this week. Mr. Bergman thought it was important to start
120 modestly and with priorities to do some triage. He cited some practical applications. Mr.
121 Bergman would share links to some other cities. He was unsure the City would see it as a
122 valuable asset. Lands and rights-of-way would have to be defined and prioritized so it is less
123 overwhelming. Mr. Bergman noted the tree inventory done by Keene State College, done by
124 Bartlett Tree Service from Connecticut, for which now all the trees have a QR code tag. He
125 further noted the high cost associated with any mature tree replacement that may be required
126 during construction projects as he was provided quotes from Bartlett Tree Service. Mr. Bergman
127 thought the City had done a good job with the spread of tree diseases as well as tree replacement
128 within the right-of-ways, but also recognized the cost of conducting an inventory. The Chair
129 said it was worth looking into, noting the Keene State inventory, the Ashuelot River Park
130 inventory, and the Main Street inventory, so perhaps this could be a citizen science initiative as
131 outreach. Mr. Bergman said there were other issues of utility tree pruning and removal that the
132 Commission is not always notified.

133
134 Mr. Bill asked about contacting someone from Brattleboro who may be involved with their
135 inventory, to not reinvent the wheel, possibly inviting someone to a future meeting. Mr. Bergman
136 said their inventory was a few years ago but it is maintained and used in City planning.

137
138 Mr. Reilly suggested that Antioch University might have students in urban forestry looking for
139 such a study. Mr. Bergman said that for students and advisors to take that on it would require
140 some scientific application of value.

141
142 **F) Photo Library**

143
144 Chair Von Plinsky recalled that Ms. Brunner said this might not be too complicated and could be
145 as simple as a Google drive folder. He would follow-up with Ms. Brunner. Mr. Bergman noted
146 that organization would be important.

147
148 **5) New or Other Business**

149
150 Ms. Clark announced the opportunity to be a Keene representative to the Ashuelot River Local
151 Advisory Committee. Interested individuals could attend a 7:00 PM meeting on October 18 in
152 person or via Zoom. Generally, their meetings cover all shoreland and wetland permitting
153 processes up and down the 60-mile corridor. The group also makes comments on developments.
154 In addition, they have various watershed projects such as the Source to Sea Clean-Up and the
155 May–September river monitoring, which this Commission funds partially. There is also now a
156 corridor management plan. The commitment is 7:00–9:00 PM on the third Tuesday of the month
157 in person at Green Energy Options or via Zoom as long as a quorum is present in person. If
158 interested, let Ms. Clark know and she would share the Zoom link.

159

160 Mr. Therriault recalled Ms. Clark asking about the pollinator garden at the Monadnock View
161 Cemetery. He shared photos with Ms. Clark and discussed the need to have a conversation with
162 the Parks Director in the spring to lay black plastic to solarize the grass before planting more
163 pollinator flowers.

164

165 Chair Von Plinsky recalled that in December, the Commission votes for a Chair and Vice Chair
166 for the forthcoming year. He would like to focus on the 30x30 idea, and would not accept
167 another nomination for Chair. He asked others to begin considering whether they would like to
168 serve.

169

170 **6) Adjournment – Next Meeting Date: Monday, November 21, 2022**

171

172 There being no further business, Chair Von Plinsky adjourned the meeting at 5:11 PM.

173

174 Respectfully submitted by,
175 Katie Kibler, Minute Taker
176 October 20, 2022

177

178 Reviewed and edited by,
179 Corinne Marcou, Administrative Assistant

180

Antioch University New England - Environmental Studies Department

Collaborative Service Initiative

Request for Project - Application

Organizational Name: Keene, NH Conservation Commission

Organization Address: 3 Washington Street, Keene, NH 03431

Client Representative: Mari Brunner, Community Development & Sparky Von Plinsky, Chair, Conservation Commission

Contact Telephone: (603) 352-5440 - Keene Community Development Office

Contact Email: mbrunner@keeneeh.gov & sparky.vonplinsky@gmail.com

Project Description

Attach this cover page to no more than a total of two pages (single spaced), containing the response to the following questions:

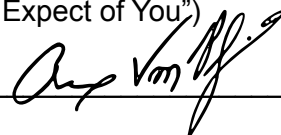
- Please describe your organization's mission and goals.
- What is the specific problem or challenge your organization would like assistance addressing?
- Please describe the proposed project to help address the above problem or challenge, including what the project would involve and any new initiatives to apply that support the project.
- What are the skills and expertise necessary to complete the project?
- List specific project deliverables, timeline for specific steps to be completed along the way, and deadline for completion (the students will have 4 months to complete the project).

COMMITMENT TO FULFILL EXPECTATIONS OF CLIENT

We have read and agree to the client expectation ("What We Expect of You")

Organization Director Alexander "Sparky" Von Plinsky

November 7, 2022 (print name) (signature) (date)



Representative Client _____

(print name) (signature) (date)

PLEASE RETURN by email to Suzanne Green (sgreen5@antioch.edu) by **November 7, 2022**.

Applications for Spring 2023 Projects (Jan. to April) due by November 7, 2022

Please email Suzanne Green (sgreen5@antioch.edu) with any questions

Organizational Information

- **Please describe your organization's mission and goals.**
 - a. Among other duties Keene's Conservation Commission is charged with the following:
 - i. Promoting the stewardship of natural resources in the city and the protection of watershed resources of the city.
 - ii. Regarding land as an extremely important asset, whose use should be consistent with the long-range community values.
 - iii. Assisting in developing and stating objectives and goals for community improvement.
 - iv. Developing active regional cooperation on commission programs.
 - v. Maintaining an index and developing land management plans for city conservation lands and open areas to prevent a drastic alteration of natural topography, drainage, and scenery.
- **What is the specific problem or challenge your organization would like assistance addressing?**
 - a. The commission would like to catalog and prioritize the land within city limits (roughly 24,000 acres) in support of a goal to conserve at least 30 percent of Keene's land in perpetuity.
 - b. Additionally, we would like to construct a framework of conservation criteria that would be general enough to share with neighboring towns so that our conservation efforts extend beyond our city limits.
- **Please describe the proposed project to help address the above problem or challenge, including what the project would involve and any new initiatives to apply that support the project.**
 - a. As we envision the project it would help us answer the following questions:
 - i. Which areas of the city should be prioritized for conservation based on a set of objective criteria including, but not limited to: wildlife habitat, water source protection, flood prevention, scenic value and recreational value?
 - ii. What is the current state of land conservation within city limits? Namely, on a spectrum from Permanently Developed through Permanently Conserved where do individual parcels/areas fall?
 - iii. Where should we concentrate our efforts and resources (financial and otherwise) to best conserve the most (and most valuable) land as quickly and as permanently as possible?

- iv. These efforts are in support of a proposed goal/initiative of conserving 30% of the city by 2030 (30 by 30).
- **What are the skills and expertise necessary to complete the project?**
 - a. The following skills would, in our opinion, be necessary for a successful project:
 - i. An understanding of the patterns and processes of southwestern New Hampshire's landscape.
 - ii. An understanding of the needs of local wildlife to not only survive but to thrive.
 - iii. The ability to identify and prioritize land values from a variety of different viewpoints including (but not limited to): Natural systems, recreational, commercial and residential uses
 - iv. GIS Mapping skills will be vital.
 - v. The ability to construct a framework that can be shared across the region.
- **List specific project deliverables, timeline for specific steps to be completed along the way, and deadline for completion (the students will have 4 months to complete the project).**
 - a. Deliverables:
 - i. A general framework for prioritizing land in Keene.
 - ii. A map and accompanying spreadsheet/database clearly laying out the current state of conservation and development within the city. This would also include an identification of "conserved" lands on a spectrum from simply undeveloped to permanently conserved.
 - iii. A map/spreadsheet identifying broad areas of the city best suited for conservation for a variety of reasons including but not limited to:
 - 1. Wildlife habitat value
 - 2. Hydrological value
 - 3. Recreational value
 - 4. Scenic/Character value
 - iv. If possible a map/spreadsheet identifying specific parcels that could be prioritized to best support the goal/initiative of 30 by 30.
 - b. Timeline and Deadline
 - i. The commission is available to help the students complete the project within their semester and are quite happy to meet with them as often as is necessary for them to complete the project within the CSI stated 4 month timeline.