

FINAL

**LEBANON CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
Thursday, July 11, 2019  
7:00 PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ernst Oidtmann (Acting Chair), Erling Heistad, Sarah Riley,  
Susan Almy

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Donald Lacey, Suellen Balestra (Alt.)

**STAFF PRESENT:** Mark Goodwin (GIS Coordinator), Christina Hall (City Engineer)

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**1. CALL TO ORDER** – Acting Chair Ernst Oidtmann called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: May 9, 2019**

Amendments: Page 3, line 31: add “on” before what; Page 3, line 34: change “lays” to “lies”

*Susan Almy MOVED to approve the May 9, 2019 Minutes as amended and presented in the July 11, 2019 agenda packet.*

*Seconded by Sarah Riley.*

*\* The Vote on the MOTION passed (3-0-1). Ernst Oidtmann abstained because he was no present at this meeting.*

**3. PERMIT REVIEW:**

**A. CITY OF LEBANON-**

Review and comment on NHDES wetland expedited review (minimum impact only) application to add a 400’ sidewalk along Labombard Road from Heater Road. This will provide a connection between an existing sidewalk on Heater Road and a proposed sidewalk being constructed now. The minor impact project in review includes 2,790 sq. ft of impact. **CC#2019-04** (Note: detailed information on this project was included in the Conservation Commission agenda packet for this meeting.)

Christina Hall came forth representing the City of Lebanon in the above review and comment request.

Ms. Hall informed the Commission that this is a 400 ft. missing segment of a sidewalk that would add connectivity to the Heater Road Project. The Planning Board placed a condition on Dartmouth Coach’s permit to have them pay for the construction/plan design for the sidewalk and have the City do the wetland application and a crosswalk. The reason for this expedited review is the hope that this sidewalk can take place at the same time Dartmouth Coach is doing their parking lot. The sidewalk includes 2,790 sq. ft. of impact to the wetland noting that Dartmouth Coach would be letting this land (behind the sidewalk area) grow naturally and will not be maintaining it. She also informed the Commission that the US Army Corps of Engineers is looking for the wetland permit # from NH DES. This has not been submitted yet because the City was waiting for the Conservation Commission’s review first.

Ms. Hall said it would be an impervious asphalt sidewalk with the typical gravel base, noting it was almost an extended shoulder of the road with no curb, but will have catch basins and outfalls along the way because there is no drainage. At present it is sheet flowing.

The Commission asked questions about, and discussed, the following:

- Pedestrian traffic along Labombard Road.
- The longevity of the sidewalk: Ms. Hall said it should last approximately 10+-years; would not be an elevated sidewalk; would have a gravel base; would remain sheet flowing; and the surface would impermeable.
- If the Pedestrian/Bicyclist Committee has reviewed this plan: Mr. Heistad said they have not reviewed it.
- Maintenance of the sidewalk: The impact the future replacement of sidewalk would have on the wetland; Snowplowing and its impact on the wetland and if salt going into the wetlands would be impacted from the salting of the sidewalk during the winter months.
- Best management practices of the Army Corps of Engineers and the NH DES. Ms. Riley asked if there were better management practices (i.e., a permeable surface as opposed to asphalt) that could be used in order to make this sidewalk more sustainable and reduce the paved surface area. Ms. Hall said the City is coming forth to speed up the process for the review time to allow the contractor to get this sidewalk constructed at the same time as the other work is being done. She did not feel it was a good idea to put pervious pavement in because water would be collecting under the sidewalk and explained her reasons.
- Walkability and safety of pedestrians vs. conservation of the wetland: This discussion included the Planning Board's condition to Dartmouth Coach to pay for a sidewalk and its design to get pedestrians off of Labombard Rd. due to increased traffic from developments in the area.

Ms. Almy said that we have essentially been putting a lot of urban infrastructure on marshes for 40 years now, and we are going to be completely cutting off one side (of the marsh) from the other, with something that is going to be disintegrating within 10 years. Her concern was about the longevity of sidewalk and suggested a boardwalk be installed.

Ms. Riley questioned if the Planning Board considered any alternative configuration to Labombard Road instead of adding this additional paved surface area in the wetland and explained her reasonings. Her goal is to minimize paved areas, to slow down traffic, and get pedestrian and cyclists to wherever they want to be safely. Ms. Hall said this did not come up at the Planning Board meeting. Mr. Goodwin said this would be probably be the preferred alternative on a slower, rural residential neighborhood street, but here there is bus traffic.

Ms. Almy said that she felt the Planning Board should go back and talk with the Ped/Bike Committee.

Councilor Heistad said he had no major concerns from a Conservation Commission standpoint.

Ms. Riley questioned if Lebanon had limitations to salting sidewalks near wetlands. She also expressed her concerns about how the City maintains sidewalks as a safe place for pedestrians to walk, noting that urban sidewalks, in non-wetland environments, are difficult to walk on during certain times of the year due to ice. She questioned how icy this sidewalk was going to be and how much salt/gravel would be used. Ms. Hall said it would not be much different than what is being experienced now. In a storm, this sidewalk would probably be done once, noting the City's priority areas are school routes and the downtown area. Councilor Heistad said that once the City accepts this sidewalk, it would be treated just like any other sidewalk in terms of maintenance.

Mr. Goodwin said that if you were wearing a Planning Board hat, it's a no brainer: you are trying to make a safe passage for people. If you are wearing a Conservation Commission hat and saying I do not want any more impervious material here, then people who walk in this area would be walking on the street.

Councilor Heistad said that conservation interests could create a dangerous section in this area for pedestrians and felt this application should move forward. There is already a road that crosses over the wetland area now and felt that, since people would be walking on the road, the Commission should figure out what they are comfortable doing to promote a safe way for the people to walk. He understood that the Ped/Bike Committee is more concerned about getting a crosswalk but walking in the roadway is not the safest way to go. Putting in a sidewalk beside the road is only going to increase the impervious surface area by 5 ft. (2,790 sq. ft. of impact) and he was uncertain what the Commission could promote that would have the same benefit of pedestrian safety and be any better for the wetland.

More discussions took place regarding the sidewalk construction, its culverts, subsurface drainage, buffer area, longevity, and pedestrian safety vs. conservation of the wetlands.

Ms. Riley said she is not opposed to a sidewalk if it is well done and again explained her problems with sidewalks. Councilor Heistad said that it all comes down to the maintenance budget. The City does not have enough funds to keep our sidewalks in what we consider are safe conditions. It would be a tremendous increase in City costs for manpower and materials to do this.

Ms. Almy's concern was making the understructure of the sidewalk strong enough so it would not have to be replaced by something much bigger 10-years later. The Commission discussed Ms. Almy's concern about how the sidewalk would be constructed.

***Councilor Heistad MOVED that the Conservation Commission recommends approval of the application by the City to expedite the NHDES wetland expedited review (minimum impact only) application (CC#2019-04) to add a 400' sidewalk along Labombard Road because, despite our reluctance to have additional pavement in the wetlands, pedestrian safety/connectivity outweighs wetland impact concerns.***

***Seconded by Mr. Oidtmann.***

***\*The Vote on the Motion was approved (4-0).***

#### **4. STUDY ITEMS: NONE**

#### **5. COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

A. Conservation Lands Monitors (Various Members): Mr. Goodwin updated the Commission on field

reports. Work/repairs being done in these areas were also discussed.

B. Lebanon Biodiversity Group (D. Lacey): Ms. Riley said she is working with a group on creating a pollinator corridor along the Mascoma Greenway. She will also be meeting with a summer school group to educate them on invasive plants.

C. Workshops & Educational Opportunities (Various Members): Mr. Goodwin informed the Commission that there would be an event on Friday, August 9, 2019, 8:30AM – 1:30PM, 54 Portsmouth St., Concord, NH. This is being sponsored by NH Association of Natural Resource Scientists.

#### **6. OTHER BUSINESS:**

- Letter to landowners: Letter has been drafted and ready to go. 400-600 envelopes need to be stuffed.
- Master Plan: Ms. Riley had no updates on Chapter 5, Natural Resources.

- Mr. Goodwin reminded the Commission that the agenda is driven by members of the Commission, so if they had topics they would like to discuss, to let him know.
- Commission membership was discussed. With the resignation of Harrison (Hal) Bourne, Al Miltner and Shane Smith (Alt. Council Rep.) from the Commission, it is important to start recruiting for new memberships.
- Elections: Since elections were held in April, Mr. Goodwin was uncertain whether the Vice Chair could act as Chair for the next 6 months or if elections needed to take place at the next meeting. Ms. Almy said that Suellen Balestra requested to be just an alternate member.

**7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:** No future agenda items were proposed.-

**8. OPEN TO PUBLIC:** No one from the public was present at this meeting.

**9. ADJOURNMENT:**

*Councilor Heistad MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 PM.*

*Seconded by Sarah Riley.*

*\* The Vote on the MOTION passed (4-0).*

Respectfully submitted,  
Dona E. Gibson  
Recording Secretary