

**Land Stewardship Subcommittee**  
**Town Hall Chambers - 8 Newmarket Road**  
**Meeting Minutes for October 9, 2024**

Members Attending: Ann Welsh, Gale Carey, John Carroll, Neil Slepian, Darrell Ford, Carolyn Singer

Attending by Zoom: Ted Howard

Absent: John Nachilly, Marty Gorham, Myrta Janosz

Also Attending: Sara Callaghan, Todd Selig, Rachel Gasowski

1. Meeting was called to order at 8:32
2. Approval of the meeting agenda was moved by Gale Carey, second by Darrell Ford. Passed unanimously with voice roll call.  
Neil Slepian was announced as today's Conservation Commission representative.
3. 8:36 Approval of the September 11<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes were moved by Darell Ford, second by Gale Carey with no changes. Vote was taken by roll call.

Approved: Carolyn Singer, Neil Slepian, Gale Carey, Darrell Ford and Ann Welsh  
Abstained: John Carroll, Ted Howard

4. Land Stewardship Updates:
  - a. Longmarsh Preserve Trails Update  
Bog bridge resurfacing projects were completed over the past couple weeks and four volunteer days. Sara Callaghan showed photos of volunteers working on the project. Conservation Commission approved funding to build a new bridge crossing across Crommet Creek just upstream of the stone bridge. The work will be completed by Greg DiSanto from Martin Forestry in November.
  - b. Land Stewardship Planning and Inventory Sheet:  
There are two different excel workbooks that Ann drafted to track stewardship on the different conservation lands: one includes an inventory of improvements on lands with recreational access with individual sheets for each property identifying the goals of the management goals for the property. The Second, lists all the stewardship tasks/responsibilities that require

funding and the properties that contain those types of infrastructure or stewardship needs.

The goal is to have these spreadsheets give an overview of the various needs and costs of stewardship and create short-term and long-term budget planning.

c. 2025 Focus Project:

Ann encouraged the Land Stewardship Subcommittee to identify priority projects for 2025 and suggested Oyster River as the next property that requires trail infrastructure improvements including the main bridge crossing the brook within the fields as well as a bridge in the woods. Ann would like the next meeting to take place at Oyster River Forest.

d. 2025 Budget:

Todd and Sara presented the proposal for land stewardship budget for 2025, which includes increasing the land stewardship coordinator position, maintaining the field and trail mowing, maintaining the stewardship fund and decreasing the survey budget. There was a discussion about the different funds available for stewardship projects including the use of grant funding.

e. Miscellaneous:

- i. Neil asked about progress on submitting his description of the Pike property onto the website. Sara agreed to submit the edited version to Craig and Neil will identify photographs he wants Craig to add.
- ii. Ann would like signs posted at the boundaries of trails that cross onto lands owned by others similar to the ones UNH displays.
- iii. Ann encouraged other members of the subcommittee to request agenda items if they are aware of needs that should be addressed on any conservation areas.

5. Land Stewardship Coordinator position update

- a. Todd interviewed one potential candidate. Search for a new coordinator has primarily been by word of mouth and active networking. A copy of the job description will be posted on the NH Land Trust Coalition website.

6. Reports from Committees:

- a. Trustees of Trust Funds report by Ted Howard:

Ted is still working with Charlie Moreno to update the forest management plan contract for Doe Farm. Rockingham County Conservation District recently completed buckthorn herbicide treatment at Doe Farm

- b. Conservation Commission report by Neil Slepian:  
Progress was made on the Shoreland and Wetlands Overlay District.
  - c. Historic Committee by Carloyn Singer:
    - i. The committee is working on creating a historic marker for each property.
    - ii. They continue to advise on the rehabilitation of the Bickford-Chesley House at Wagon Hill Farm. In the historic main house the current plans include a first floor gallery space for meetings and second floor care takers apartment. They hope to use the new barn will be used for public programming.
  - d. Parks and Rec report by Rachel Gasowski:  
Discover Durham Trails have been a success. Over 30 attendees at Longmarsh “Fun Guys” walk and around 15 at Oyster River Forest wildlife walk with Ellen Snyder. The next walk will take place November 10<sup>th</sup> at Stevens Woods and will be led by Jeremy Howland a PhD student and Durham resident.
  - e. Agriculture Committee report by John Carroll:  
Anton Bekkerman, Director of the Agricultural Research Station, is looking for agricultural lands in the Durham area for research and hay production. They are specifically looking for approximately 5 acre of farmland for Agroforestry plantings.
7. 10:01 Motion to adjourn the meeting by Darrell Ford, second by Neil Slepian. Motion passed unanimously.