

## **APPROVED AS AMENDED MINUTES**

Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Select Board Members

Site Visit, Knights Meadow Marsh

April 1, 2021

The meeting officially started at 1:05 p.m. Planning Board members present included Susan Rauth (Chair), Paul King, Craig Fournier and David Hemenway. Conservation Commission Members included Dan Moran (Chair), Linda Clark, Betsy Janeway, Susan Roman and Chris Schadler. David Hemenway and Chris Schadler (Chair) are also Select Board members. Residents Addie Mock and Chuck Rose were in attendance, as was Jasen Stock, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association.

The group met at the invitation to Mr. Mock. Chair Rauth offered a brief introduction to the site visit. She thanked Mr. Mock for the invitation to tour the site. She explained that the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission have been developing a wetlands ordinance for 1.5 years. The purpose of the ordinance is to protect the water quality of wetlands and surface water by providing a vegetative buffer. Members have reviewed the laws and regs that pertain to timber harvesting and forestry and may have some questions. One objective is to start a dialogue to understand more about timber harvesting practices. Another objective is to look at ways we can work together to mitigate the impact of logging on wetlands and surface waters and to avoid problems with development on unsuitable land.

Mr. Mock presented a brief history of his land. He wanted the board and commission members to see the effects of timber harvesting in person. The participants walked to several areas within the 45 acres. Mr. Mock explained the purpose of removing the timber and dead trees to clear the way for pine seedlings, hemlocks and other species to grow anew. External factors such as climate and storms impact the forest growth and management. Discussion also focused on the Best Management Practices (BMPs) and other laws and rules that govern timber harvesting, including basal cut limits; enforcement; succession and reforestation practices.

The Select Board Chair Christine Schadler asked whether the land cleared and stumped for the solar array project would be suitable. Mr. Mock said the stumps would be buried and wouldn't decay. They would present a sufficient base for the solar panels.

Ms. Rauth clarified that the Planning Board has the authority to regulate timber harvesting in wetlands as a part of a subdivision or site plan review. Mr. Stock explained that, in his point of view, the regulations drive the land use and development. However, the laws don't protect everything. He suggested the town works with the county forester rangers when they have questions or potential issues. The rangers can assist the Town and inform landowners about the state laws and DES regulations, as appropriate. It was agreed that DES doesn't have adequate staff to respond to towns' land use issues or to enforce the state laws and regulations.

Generally, the parties look to strike the balance between timbering as an economic use of the land and sustainable forests, and the benefits of protecting the quality of the wetlands in the broader ecosystem for future generations.

Ms. Rauth thanked Mr. Mock, Mr. Rose and Mr. Stock for their time. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Rauth, Chair  
Planning Board

Approved as Amended 4/15/21