

CONCORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2025, 8:30 a.m.

City Hall, 2nd Fl Conference Rm, 41 Green St

Attendees: Rick Chormann, Mark Coen, Jim Owers, Emily Landry, Vice-Chair Jeff Lewis,
and Chair Kristine Tardiff

Absent: Katherine Healy, Councilor Michele Horne, Tracey Lesser

Staff: Kearsten O'Brien, Senior Planner
Krista Tremblay, Administrative Specialist II

Public: Ron Klemarczk, Contract Consultant City Forester

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tardiff at 8:36 a.m.

2. Minutes – Approve meeting minutes from January 7, 2025

This item was postponed to the next regular meeting on February 12, 2025.

3. Conservation Land Matrix

Chair Tardiff stated the goal is for the matrix to serve as a guide for the Conservation Commission in the present and future.

Ms. Landry stated the Commission came up with different categories for the different properties on the matrix at the last special meeting in March 2024, and she had started to come up with the impact of each use. Ms. Landry asked the Commission how they would like to proceed with categorizing the different properties. Ms. Landry noted when she had drafted the document there were different impact categories ranging from no impact at all to moderate impact.

Mr. Klemarczyk used Oak Hill as an example, noting that it is made up of different lots. Mr. Klemarczyk stated that it needs to be looked at as a whole forest as opposed to the individual lots.

Chair Tardiff stated that will make it more manageable.

Mr. Chormann noted the properties are a mix of uses. Mr. Chormann stated they did not speak much about the resilience of landscapes for climate change and other ecological services provided to the community other than recreation. Mr. Chormann said that they need to tailor the matrix to a wide variety of landscapes and social demands for interacting with those landscapes. Mr. Chormann said that he went to the Old Growth Conference and the last conversation he had with Mr. Kane was the desire to maintain some of these properties as wild lands and feels he has an obligation to make sure the message is heard but also be respectful of all other uses. Mr. Chormann stated there is a great trail system in Concord but how many more trails do they need? How much income is needed from cutting timber? Mr. Chormann noted this is a tough process for the Commission to go through, but it is good they are discussing the timber management at the same time.

CONCORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2025, 8:30 a.m.

City Hall, 2nd Fl Conference Rm, 41 Green St

Ms. O'Brien asked the Commission if it would make sense to have the updated forestry plan in place first and put a hold on the matrix until the 2009 forestry management plan is updated.

Mr. Klemarczyk stated the preservation matrix can come first, that the plans are connected, forestry has changed over the years, and there is more talk about the resiliency in forestry.

Vice-Chair Lewis asked about old growth and the carbon resilience.

Mr. Chormann said that ecological resiliency is diversity of uneven aged trees and a mix of species. Old growth comprises downed wood covered in moss. Discussion ensued regarding regenerative growth.

Chair Tardiff noted the Conservation Commission built it into a plan in terms of resiliency to discuss and help guide the Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission has not taken the concept and applied it.

Mr. Klemarczyk stated most of the forest when he started with the City of Concord was even aged. Mr. Klemarczyk pointed out that was mostly because it was farm land that was abandoned. Mr. Klemarczyk noted it grew in with white pine. To get it uneven aged, you have to harvest to get regeneration started. Some areas they set aside as old growth. Mr. Klemarczyk pointed out that old growth is not what it used to be due to invasive species. This is why regeneration is more important because if we lose all the hemlock in the southwest portion of Country Hill Estates there is not much left but a few scattered oak and pine.

Mr. Chormann stated maybe that is what the Conservation Commission wants, as this is a way nature is telling us we need to adapt. Just because they are losing the hemlock that does not mean another species will not find a home. Mr. Chormann stated nature knows how to function. Mr. Chormann noted climate is a huge unknown. Mr. Chormann would like for nature to be able to do its thing, and competing uses are not critical.

Chair Tardiff noted this goes back to the Conservation Commission trying to identify some parcels where it makes sense to address resiliency and where timber harvest is or is not part of the management plan.

Vice-Chair Lewis pointed out this is the City of Concord and a small area trying to live in an urban environment. Vice-Chair asked how we can manage trees that are dying and does that promote diversity?

Ms. Landry does not see why the Conservation Commission should not aim for old growth forest in the City of Concord. Ms. Landry pointed out there is not much old growth in the State of New Hampshire. If the Conservation Commission allows some to take place, then there is diversity in forest classes.

Mr. Klemarczyk noted if you look at the City's acreage as a whole there is a lot of diversity. Mr. Klemarczyk pointed out it is scattered. Mr. Klemarczyk stated that one acre of old growth going to have

CONCORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2025, 8:30 a.m.

City Hall, 2nd Fl Conference Rm, 41 Green St

the same impact as 80 acres of old growth. Mr. Klemarczyk pointed out you need to look at size and scale. Mr. Klemarczyk noted with the small City forest you will not accomplish a lot due to lack of acreage to provide all of what you would like to see in an old growth forest.

Mr. Chormann stated any old growth is better than what they have right now.

Chair Tardiff suggested the Conservation Commission look at the parcels they have classified for example as wildlife preserve and broaden the definition. For Country Hill maybe it is not the entirety of the complex and say leave it alone knowing trails could be coming in and leave a portion alone.

Ms. Landry stated that makes sense.

Mr. Chormann stated he would like to see a nature preserve or wildlands label for land to develop on its own with no human intervention.

Vice-Chair Lewis noted the Conservation Commission is discussing old growth forest. Vice-Chair Lewis asked how much do the trails and large corridors on either side impact the wildlife? Vice-Chair Lewis noted it does not have as much impact to the old growth. To what extent do those two things go together?

Mr. Chormann stated there is a tradeoff. Mr. Chormann noted any time you introduce humans into the natural world you are making compromises. These trails will be used recreationally. One hiking trail on a 50-acre track probably does not have a lot of impact on the surroundings other than the trail itself.

Chair Tardiff noted the Conservation Commission has enough land for them to do both and they need to identify which land is for what purpose.

Vice-Chair Lewis noted they started conservation with nature preserve. Vice-Chair Lewis suggested to remove the preserve ones and then what do you do with all of the rest? Vice-Chair Lewis pointed out that the Conservation Commission would then need a management plan for every other piece of land.

Mr. Chormann stated there are parcels where there can be no timber management. Then, there are parcels where the public uses them heavily for recreation and all of the other acreage in between. Mr. Chormann pointed out some could have high timber production and growth potential in terms of logging practicality. Active forestry could be the number one use to generate revenue for the City. There could be other properties where there are too many constraints. Mr. Chormann recommended the Conservation Commission look at the extremes and work towards the middle.

Chair Tardiff suggested they organize the parcels.

Ms. Landry noted the need to have a primary focus and then have an impact goal.

CONCORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2025, 8:30 a.m.

City Hall, 2nd Fl Conference Rm, 41 Green St

Mr. Klemarczyk stated he has worked on 32 lots for the City of Concord. Mr. Klemarczyk will type up notes for each lot and send to the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Owers recommended broad categories to start.

Chair Tardiff suggested to look at the impact as a goal.

Ms. Landry stated impact categories of none, low, or moderate.

Mr. Chormann asked if there are certain parcels that Mr. Klemarczyk sees as prime productive lots.

Mr. Klemarczyk stated the most productive forest is Batchelder Hill Rd which is next to Broken Ground. It is a great pine site, with good stocking and well managed. However, it is starting to get into that old growth category.

Mr. Chormann stated due to Mr. Klemarczyk's vast experience, the Conservation Commission would like to identify the locations of the most productive soils, easy to access the timber, and where we will receive the highest return.

Mr. Klemarczyk stated there is 4,886 acres of forest land he has worked on.

Mr. Chormann asked if some of the land needs updated for future logging?

Mr. Klemarczyk stated the Conservation Commission can do a combination of both.

Mr. Owers noted at the bottom of the spreadsheet there are properties that have not been discussed. Mr. Owers suggested they look at the properties that have not been discussed.

Mr. Klemarczyk stated there are properties that are listed on the matrix with different names/labels/titles that are referred to differently in other documents.

Ms. Landry noted there could be duplicates.

Ms. O'Brien asked the Conservation Commission if they would like for Mr. Klemarczyk and Ms. O'Brien to review the matrix spreadsheet for duplicates and then get back to the Commission?

Mr. Klemarczyk stated he will do that for the Commission.

Chair Tardiff suggested at next meeting to discuss the parcels that have not been reviewed. Then discuss the use categories. Chair Tardiff decided to have another special meeting next month to discuss this agenda item again.

CONCORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2025, 8:30 a.m.

City Hall, 2nd Fl Conference Rm, 41 Green St

Vice-Chair Lewis asked for there to be discussion on inventory.

Mr. Chormann asked if there is a list of locations where there are endangered species?

Mr. Klemarczyk stated he does that now as part of the management plan.

Emily Landry left the meeting at 9:45 a.m.

4. Forestry Management Plan update discussion

5. Staff update

Chair Tardiff stated the Conservation Commission needs to go back to the Trails Subcommittee to discuss the bypass trail that needs to be completed under the settlement agreement. Chair Tardiff stated they have gone and walked it and need to discuss where to come back in.

Mr. Owers will not be able to attend the February Conservation Commission meeting.

Chair Tardiff asked if they have mapped out where the trail will go?

Mr. Klemarczyk included it in the budget for July 1, 2025.

Vice-Chair Lewis stated there needs to be more discussion.

Chair Tardiff stated they need to discuss at the March Conservation Commission meeting and then go to the Trails Subcommittee.

Vice-Chair Lewis stated this needs to go through the process.

Chair Tardiff noted they need to map the bypass so it can go to the Trails Subcommittee as a proposal to let them know where to start.

Mr. Klemarczyk will put together a map and report back to the Conservation Commission.

Chair Tardiff asked for the map to be ready for the February Conservation Commission meeting.

Adjournment

Vice-Chair Lewis moved, seconded by Chair Tardiff, to adjourn the meeting at 10:02 a.m. All in favor.
Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

CONCORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2025, 8:30 a.m.

City Hall, 2nd Fl Conference Rm, 41 Green St

Krista Tremblay

Krista Tremblay

Administrative Specialist II