

Town of Groton
Select Board Work Session Minutes
Planning Board Meeting
January 22, 2020

In attendance:

- **Rebecca Hanson (NLRA)**
- **From the Planning Board: Deb Johnson, Dave LaBar, Ray Blake, Dave Madden, Kristina Brodie and Russ Carruth**
- **From the Select Board: John Rescigno and Sara Smith (Administrative Assistant - AA); Absent: Ron Madan and Tony Albert**
- **From the Conservation Commission: Slim Spafford and Gina Rescigno**
- **From the Public: Sherry Nelson**

Deb called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Meeting with NLRA new Executive Director Rebecca Hanson

Everyone introduced themselves to Rebecca. Rebecca introduced herself. She grew up in Holderness so grew up around here. She moved out west for about 10 years but then got a call home. She has spent the last almost ten years working on Squam Lake which is where she spent a lot of time as a kid. She lives in Plymouth and is the Chair on the Planning Board there. She also sat on the Conservation Commission for a while as well. She started at NLRA in mid-October. She is getting her bearings and learning about the communities. Groton was the first town to reach out to her and invite her to a meeting. She thanked all the departments for meeting at once so she could meet with one trip which saves her a lot of time and night meetings. She said even though Groton is not a lake front community they are an important part of the Newfound Community.

She has spent the last few months learning about the Newfound Community, the organization, and trying to figure out what the direction is for the future. They have their eye towards the Grey Rocks Property to see what is going to happen there. They are going to continue to monitor the water quality in both the tributaries and the lake itself. They just wrapped up their fourth watershed management plan through funding from the Department of Environmental Services which is actually EPA funding that gets channeled through the State Government. They will be working on another application for clean water act funding. The most recent projects have been some paving, culvert replacement, working with local towns to put together any projects that are designed to protect water quality.

She wanted to use tonight to see how NLRA can work with the Town to get healthy water quality in the lake but also in the communities that have water that runs into the lake. Deb explained that she worked with Boyd and the Planning Board did partner with NLRA on a zoning ordinance that was more comprehensive than the one we have. This did not pass at last years Town Meeting. In that ordinance there was some steep slope regulations, conservation items, a business area, and changed zoning into districts throughout the Town so that there were residential and rural. They are not bringing a zoning ordinance to the Town this year, but they are looking at the subdivision plan regs, site plan regs and excavation regs to see what we can legally put in those regulations that will protect the Town. Also, bringing all regulations and definitions into consistency with each other. Any guidance that Rebecca and NLRA can provide would be greatly appreciated. The Select Board just completed a review of the Hazard

Mitigation Plan and are working on the update now. Deb mentioned that it was suggested that steep slope requirements are an area that the Planning Board should work on along with water access in subdivisions so that Fire and Emergency personnel can access water.

Rebecca asked why everyone thinks the zoning didn't pass. She understands they are hard to pass through Towns and they are working on theirs in Plymouth. Deb mentioned there was community involvement in Groton so the residents could meet and provide feedback. They did mailings to the residents. They started out with two public hearings and meetings. There were work sessions. A lot of people from out of Town came and the diehards came but very few of the voting residents came. There were some frontage requirements and setbacks which were a touchy subject for a lot of people. There was a lot of mailings and outreach. The information was put online. She thinks it had to do with some wrong information that was discussed and a mailing that went out the day before voting. The big issue is getting people to meetings and engaged in the process but they don't know how else to do this besides what they did before. It was also explained that it may have been too much at once so they will try to slim the ordinance down and just do sections at a time for the next time. That is what the Planning Board is up to along with making sure they are following what is outlined in the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Deb asked if it is up to the Town to enforce the State Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act? Rebecca said it is up to the State to enforce the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act. Deb said that is what she thought but how does the State know what is happening here. Rebecca said that the Town would want any relevant wetlands permit to be part of the subdivision plans, etc. as she is sure the Town does. She said the challenge of the Shoreland Water Quality Protection act is that it is a solid regulation but it doesn't have personnel to enforce it. There are only two people statewide to enforce this. Since Spectacle Pond is not large, she suggested taking GPS photos now and periodically so you can show if any differences or changes were made. Gina asked what is considered shoreland permits versus wetlands permit. Rebecca said they are handled by different people. Gina is on the conservation commission so Rebecca mentioned she should see the wetlands permits and shoreland permits and they are required to review them.

Sherry mentioned that about 14-15 years ago Slim and her attended a NLRA meeting. A lot of the people talked about the wonderful quality of the lake. Boyd explained at that meeting that the quality of the lake has a lot to do with Groton because Groton's water especially the Cocker mouth runs into the lake. Recently Sherry has heard that other people who have done testing in Groton to test the water running into the lake. Sherry said it would be great if the test results were communicated to Groton so that we know if it needs to be improved or not. Rebecca said that she is hoping to have yearly meetings in each town as to what they are seeing. They have been monitoring the water quality in the lake for 33 years and she is not sure how long the tributaries have been but they are monitoring it through UNH Cooperative Extension. They are testing monthly and it is mostly a volunteer driven program and they are always looking for volunteers so if anyone wants to get involved in the testing, they would appreciate it and can contact NLRA. They are also trying to understand how the storm water flow effects this especially with the Storm that hit this Town in July. She said she should have more information and is asking for a year or two to get that going.

Sara mentioned that speaking of the Storm that happened in July, Sara had reached out to Rebecca when she first started regarding our concerns with the Atwell Orange Brook since they July storm. This needs to be cleaned out as there is a lot of debris and it is still darker water when it rains. The Town has reached out to DES, Fish and Game since they own the property, Army Corps of Engineers, the Senator, etc. regarding our concerns and everyone agrees it needs to be cleaned out and will give permitting but

no one has any money to provide. The town doesn't have the money either and was wondering if there is anything the NLRA can suggest or do for the town to assist with this and if they have any interest in helping us with this. John mentioned that storm redirected the brook and it jumped the bank. The brook goes in a totally different direction and there is massive erosion. Clay is constantly going into that water, which goes into the Cockermouth and into the lake. The Select Board recently met with Glenn Normandeau, the Executive Director Fish and Game Glenn, and again no money but he suggested finding a National Guard Engineering Battalion that could use training in that area. Glenn said he is going to talk to his counterpart, the guy in charge of the National Guard in NH. This is our biggest concern. Rebecca said there has been funding in the past for other rivers, such as the Suncook River. She is more than happy to look into this to get more information for us and to work any connections she may have. Rebecca said they don't have the funding to just fix it but there is a watershed plan that was done in 2006 and again. This means they can apply for funding through section 319 of the clean water act. These are funds that are designed in order to reduce what is going into the lake so there may be funding there but there is a funding cycle. John said that Fish and Game bought it with federal money so they are restrictions as to what they can do to that land and it can only benefit wildlife on that land. There is a clear path that we could use to get in there to clean it out. Rebecca asked if people lost their homes. It was explained that residents did have severe damage to their homes and other homes are threatened by it. John mentioned that it also took out the road and was coming right down Sculptured Rocks Road. John mentioned his reading was 7 inches but that was up here so they could have easily have gotten 10 inches there. Sara mentioned that the swift water team was out there to help the families that were stranded out there. Rebecca said that she will talk with her contacts at DES to see when the next watershed planning grant is. She said she knows what color the lake turned after that storm so it is a priority for everyone. We have families out that that are scared of what will happen and are nervous each time it rains. We have been lucky that no one has been seriously injured and there haven't been lives lost but each storm gets worse and we are afraid of what could happen if this isn't fixed. Rebecca said the frequency that we are seeing these storms is increasing so this is a reality for us now. Deb said that this must affect the fishery. Rebecca said there are bigger picture items that are a long-term thing.

Slim said that he has talked with Boyd for years about the chemicals and fertilizers that go into the lake from people on West Shore Road. Slim asked Boyd if he ever knocked on his door and told him to stop. Boyd said it was a political thing. Slim asked Rebecca if she would deal with this. She said that she may not knock on his door but there are other ways to inform the residents of how these things effect the lake. There is a checklist that they can give the homeowner to protect the lake. The idea is neighbors influencing neighbors. So yes, it is an issue and yes, they are addressing it and yes, it is political. It is tricky. It can be empowering to know you can make a difference. The lake has a value to the bottom line of the Town and the property values in the town.

John asked if sewage is the worst. Rebecca said it is hard to draw how much septic is getting into the lake. Ground water movement isn't all that well documented but a poorly performing septic is gross and could be getting into the lake. Bristol is working on a sewage extension which would be great for the lake but now the question is if this will increase density which could increase run off. Slim shared an article which states if you are hooked up to that sewer you have to buy things that grind everything up which can cost the owners extra costs and extra taxes. Gina asked Rebecca what is going on in Plymouth and she said that they are ripping up South Main Street. The Storm water infrastructure and the sewer infrastructure are the same so every time there is a large weather event it washes through the waste water treatment plant so this will make them separate. Sherry mentioned that there are out houses close to the lake which seems like the water has to flow either over or under the road. Rebecca said that

she doesn't know about that but does know that a good composting toilet is going to maintain the integrity of the system so that nothing flows into the lake but she is not sure how this would affect it. Ray mentioned that he was behind a plow around the ledges and everything coming off the plow, including salt and sand, was going into the lake. Rebecca said that salt is going to be a huge issue for the State and there are some changes that are being made because of this. The road salt can impact the tiny critters that live in the lake.

Deb asked if Rebecca would be able to address any questions regarding FEMA and the Town Garage but she said she wouldn't be able to answer those questions. John said the brook was our main concern and we are working with the State but the more people looking into this, contacting the State, or willing to help the better. She said this is on her to do list and will accelerate it and is happy to help in any way that she can. She handed out her business cards and asked that the Town let her know if there is any update from Fish and Game.

Having wrapped up the NLRA meeting and no other Select Board items to discuss Deb moved into Planning Board items and Sara left the meeting at 7:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant