

Town of Raymond
Conservation Commission DRAFT Minutes of
January 20, 2021

Commission Members in Attendance:

Jan Kent, Chair
Deb McNelly, (Secretary)
Kris Holleran
Kathy McDonald

Meeting Called to Order by:

Chair Jan Kent at 6:30 PM

Commission Members Excused:

Commission Members Absent:

Kathy Lee, Alternate

Recording Secretary:

Alvina Snegach

Members of the Public in Attendance:

Melissa Potter – interested in becoming a member of the Commission. 3rd meeting attended. (left the meeting at 8:28 PM)

Michael Unger - interested in becoming a member of the Commission. 3rd meeting attended.

Roscoe Blaisdell – Bald Hill Road Open Space subdivision applicant.

Public Input:

None

A Checklist to Ensure Meetings Are Compliant With the Right-to-Know Law During The State of Emergency

Jan Kent read the checklist into the record. Next, the members recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call Attendance

Jan Kent	Melissa Porter
Deb McNelly	Michael Unger
Kris Holleran	
Kathy McDonald	

Chair Kent noted that she had received a letter of resignation from the Vice Chair June Dickerson. Members expressed gratitude to Ms. Dickerson for her years of volunteer service on the Commission. Next, they discussed who would take up the position of Vice Chair going forward. Ms. McDonald agreed to step up until the next officers' election in May. **Ms. Holleran made a motion to elect Kathy McDonald as ConsCom Vice Chair. Ms. McNelly duly seconded and motion passed 4:0 by a roll call vote: Ms. Kent – yes; Ms. Holleran – yes; Ms. McNelly – yes; and Ms. McDonald - yes.**

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44 **Agenda Items**

45

46 **Bald Hill Road Open Space Subdivision, Map 8, # 36 & 37.**

47 Chair Kent displayed the Open Space Subdivision regulations and briefly explained the
48 concept of conservation subdivision to the two potential ConsCom members. She also
49 explained the subdivision review process and what role the Commission plays in it.
50 Then she said that the sitewalk took place at the property on January 17th, which was
51 attended by most members. Site visit minutes were displayed, and Ms. Holleran read
52 them into the record.

53 Next, Ms. Kent displayed the plans for the proposed development. Roscoe Blaisdell, the
54 owner of the property, reviewed the details of the plan and stated that he disagreed
55 with the statement made in the sitewalk minutes, that the wetlands flagging was not
56 there. He said the wetlands have been flagged a couple years ago and some flags may
57 have fallen down, but the flagging has been done with orange and black striped flags.
58 Mr. Blaisdell said that the conventional subdivision would yield 37 lots without any
59 major impacts to wetlands, and the open space plan also proposed 37 smaller lots, with
60 two cul-de-sacs. There would be two detention ponds at the end of each cul-de-sac
61 with additional drainage installed. He also proposed a fire pond along Bald Hill Road if
62 the Fire Chief does not require a cistern. If there is fire pond, Mr. Blaisdell is planning to
63 create a habitat for Blanding's turtles there. As for the open space land, required for
64 this type of subdivision, Mr. Blaisdell proposed that he would remain the owner of it, as
65 he is very knowledgeable in forest management and that is what he plans to do there.
66 The land would be in conservation, and he would like to create deer food plots on it for
67 wildlife preservation.

68 Mr. Blaisdell then answered ConsCom questions about the following:

- 69 - fire pond depth – 8-10 feet;
- 70 - plans for the open space land and what would happen if he ever sold it – it
71 should remain in conservation;
- 72 - whether he would allow subdivision residents to use the land – he was not sure,
73 as he plans to hunt there and would like to keep it quiet;
- 74 - forest management and logging – he has extensive experience in forest
75 management and wants to make sure the land property managed;
- 76 - detention ponds – these both work to slow down the water and to treat it before
77 it is discharged further down into the wetland;
- 78 - plan details such as the wetland delineation and lack of legend – he will check
79 with the engineer to make sure the legend is on the plan;
- 80 - soils map and legend – he explained how the map should be read and what the
81 soil numbers and lettering stand for;
- 82 - whether the wetland between the roads was an intermittent stream – Ms.
83 Blaisdell explained that these were very poorly and poorly drained soils and that
84 there was not stream there;
- 85 - the rational for two cul-de-sacs – he answered that it was done to avoid major
86 wetland impacts;

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- 87 - private roads – he answered that both the road and drainage infrastructure are
- 88 proposed to be owned and maintained by the home owners association (HOA);
- 89 - individual lots’ drainage – he said the front areas are designed to drain towards
- 90 the road and then into the detention ponds. He added that the State and the
- 91 Town are reviewing the drainage report as part of the review process;
- 92 - house, well, driveway, and septic placement on the lots – Mr. Blaisdell said that
- 93 the plan has to show that there is enough buildable area to accommodate a
- 94 house, well, and septic and that is what is done here; however, the actual
- 95 placement will depend on the builder and individual lot conditions;
- 96 - benefits of doing an open space development – he said that the roads are
- 97 shorter, less impact as the lots are smaller, and 50 percent of land is put into
- 98 conservation;
- 99 - maintaining perimeter buffers – Mr. Blaisdell said that he was not quite sure but
- 100 it may be required that 70 percent of the view has to be preserved; therefore,
- 101 there could not be much cutting in the perimeter buffer along the property lines,
- 102 and there is a forest management plan that is required;
- 103 - whether he considered giving the home owners association the ownership of the
- 104 land – he said that he was not sure if 37 people would agree with him, thus, he
- 105 would like to manage it himself and it will be conservation land.

106
107 Ms. Kent thanked Mr. Blaisdell for his presentation and opened the floor for discussion.
108 Members discussed potential comments they could make to the Planning Board as the
109 role of the ConsCom is advisory in this case. Much discussion focused on whether it
110 resembles double dipping, if a developer is proposing to use the provisions of the
111 ordinance to create smaller lots and higher density, but is, at the same time, keeping
112 the open space parcel to himself, thus, depriving the homeowners of the opportunity to
113 enjoy it. Members were not sure if this would even be allowed by the regulations,
114 although Mr. Blaisdell did note so. Members also discussed what could happen if Mr.
115 Blaisdell decides to sell his portion of the land (open space) down the road and whether
116 it could be developed further. Ms. Kent explained that is this open space development
117 were to be approved; the land would remain in conservation, whether it is by an
118 easement or in private ownership. She said that the only way this would change, would
119 be if the subdivision is not put in, and somebody decides to propose a whole new plan,
120 which will have to go through the Planning Board review again.

121 Members further discussed the open space land and its use and management. A point
122 was made to suggest a third party entity to hold a conservation easement for the
123 purpose of stewardship. Also discussed was a suggestion to allow the homeowners to
124 use the land for passive recreation and to prohibit ATV’s.

125 Then the members discussed making a list of items they would support in this plan, like
126 the protection of wetlands, keeping a wildlife corridor, forest management, creating a
127 habitat for Blanding’s turtle, which would depend on the decision of the Fire Chief and
128 should be done in collaboration with Fish & Game. Members also supported the fact

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129 that open space subdivision would reduce the length of the road, decrease the amount
130 of impervious surface, and prevent sprawl and a lot of lawn space.

131 Next, members discussed the wetlands delineation and they observed a lack of flagging
132 during a sitewalk. It was noted that Mr. Blaisdell was the surveyor and the wetland
133 scientist for this project, which could potentially raise conflict of interest questions.
134 Suggestions were made to make a comment that the Planning Board would request a
135 third party confirmation of the wetlands delineation and flagging in a reasonable
136 manner.

137 Ms. Kent said that she would need to check the ranking of the parcel with the
138 spreadsheet that the ConsCom had created earlier.

139 The last discussion was about the possibility of requesting some protections and
140 maintenance restrictions for the natural vegetative buffers to keep the integrity of the
141 forested areas.

142 Ms. Kent summarized all the comments and recommendations that would be sent to the
143 Planning Board as follows:

- 144 - to allow homeowners access to the conservation land for passive recreation with
145 a restriction to use OHRVs;
- 146 - if Mr. Blaisdell retains ownership of the open space parcel, a third party would
147 hold a conservation easement on the property;
- 148 - that wetlands be reflagged in the areas near the development;
- 149 - that the wetlands delineation be confirmed by a third party wetland scientist to
150 avoid conflict of interest;
- 151 - that the Commission supports Mr. Blaisdell's proposal to create a Blanding's turtle
152 habitat in an appropriate location and in collaboration with Fish & Game;
- 153 - that when homes are being built the natural vegetative buffer be preserved on
154 the lots to keep the integrity of forested areas and natural habitat;
- 155 - that the Commission supports the concept of the open space subdivision as it will
156 reduce the length of roads, decrease impervious surfaces, sprawl and lawn
157 space, protect the wetlands, preserves the wildlife corridor;
- 158 - that the Commission supports Mr. Blaisdell's forest management proposal which
159 would increase habitat improvement and diversity of wildlife.

160 Members agreed that the letter to the Planning Board should begin with all the
161 statements in support of the plan, following with the concerns and recommendations.

162 Everyone was in agreement. Ms. Kent will draft the letter.

163

164 **Prescott Road ZBA Variance Zone G - Map 24, Lot 7**

165 Chair Kent displayed the variance application and explained the details. She also noted
166 that the ConsCom can also send comments to the Zoning Board. The variance was for a
167 proposed buildable area to be less than the 40,000 sqft of contiguous upland required
168 for lots in Zone G. This is a proposed two lot subdivision and the new lot would lack the
169 contiguous upland in the amount of 6,896 sqft. Ms. Holleran noted that the plan shows
170 lack of contiguous buildable area for both lots if they are subdivided, which may put the
171 existing lot into a zoning violation. It was also noted that the existing structure on the

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172 lot is a duplex, and none of the members were sure what the requirements for those
173 are. Ms. McNelly said that she had gone by the lot and noticed that there is a stream on
174 the right of the proposed new lot and that it is now shown on the plan. Ms. Kent said
175 that the stream would require a 75 ft. buffer, whereas only 25 ft. one is shown on the
176 plan. Ms. Holleran added that if the buffer is increased, then the contiguous buildable
177 upland becomes even less. Members also expressed concerns with the drainage into the
178 wetlands and whether a vegetative buffer would be able to mitigate that. Ms. Kent said
179 that she will need to contact the Planning Department to ask for more details of this
180 variance. In the meantime a letter would be drafted from the Commission with the
181 following concerns:

- 182 - asking about the existence of a stream on the second lot;
- 183 - concern with two lots having insufficient contiguous buildable upland if they are
184 subdivided, which would put the existing house lot in violation of zoning;
- 185 - if the variance is granted, require a vegetative buffer within the 25 ft. wetland
186 buffer.

187 Ms. Kent will draft the letter and circulate it among the members for further discussion.
188 Ms. Potter requested permission and left the meeting at 8:28 PM.

189

190 **Wetland Zoning Update and Educational Material Review**

191 Ms. Holleran shared the PowerPoint document and members reviewed. Small changes
192 were made. Ms. Holleran will contact the Planning Department with a request to post it
193 on the Commission website on the first page, so it is visible.

194 The next item displayed was the article by Ms. McNelly on the effects of wetlands on
195 the drinking water. Members reviewed made no changes. Ms. McNelly will send it to
196 Deb Intonti for publishing in the "Talk of the Town" February 1st issue.

197 Mr. Unger asked if it would be possible to create a "Frequently Asked Questions"
198 section for the residents to go to as well. Everyone agreed that it was a good idea and
199 Mr. Unger volunteered to work on it.

200

201 **Annual Report Review**

202 Members reviewed the Annual Report and made small changes. Ms. Kent will forward it
203 to the Town.

204

205 **New Members Recommendation**

206 Ms. Potter earlier in the meeting indicated that she would still like to attend and take
207 some time to think about becoming a member.

208 Mr. Unger said that he made up his mind and would like to become a full member. *Ms.*
209 **Holleran made a motion to recommend Michael Unger as a full time**
210 **Conservation Commission member. Ms. McNelly duly seconded and motion**
211 **passed with a 4:0 vote taken by roll call: Ms. Kent – yes; Ms. Holleran – yes;**
212 **Ms. McDonald – yes; Ms. McNelly – yes.**

213 Ms. McNelly will send a letter to the Board of Selectmen and when the draft minutes are
214 done; those will be forwarded as well.

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215 Ms. Kent noted that the meeting was running late and suggested to postpone all the
216 remaining agenda items to the next meeting. There will be two meetings in February –
217 Feb 10th and Feb 23rd (which is a Tuesday).

218

219 **Adjournment**

220 **Kris Holleran moved to adjourn the meeting; Kathy McDonald seconded the**
221 **motion. Motion carried by a roll call vote - Deb McNelly – yes; Kris Holleran –**
222 **yes; Jan Kent – yes; Kathy McDonald – yes.**

223

224 The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

225

226 Respectfully Submitted,

227

228 Alvina Snegach

229 Recording Secretary