

**CORNISH PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES  
AUGUST 6, 2020**

The Cornish Planning Board met on Thursday, August 6, 2020, at 7pm. Attendance was by roll call. Members present in the Town Offices were Bill Lipfert, Chair; Everett Cass, and Kellie Patterson Parry; Linda Leone, Alternate; Heidi Jaarsma, Secretary; and Scott Baker, Selectman. Pursuant to RSA 91-A, the Chair waived the requirement that Board members be physically present at the meeting in light of the current Covid-19 situation. Attending via Zoom were Jonathan Glass

Also present in-person were Jim Barker, representing the Conservation Commission; Caroline Storrs, and Peter Storrs.

Attending via Zoom was Barbara Ceislicki.

Bill Lipfert called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. Mr. Lipfert authorized the meeting to be held electronically. Social distancing and mask requirements were discussed.

Welcome new Board Members.

Bill Lipfert welcomed Linda Leone to the Planning Board as an alternate.

Approval of Minutes.

Jon Glass requested that the Selectmen minutes regarding the issuance of the Certificate of Zoning Compliance be submitted into the record. Everett Cass made a motion to approve the 7/16/2020 minutes. Scott Baker seconded the motion, and Bill Lipfert took a roll call vote. Voting in the affirmative were Scott Baker, Everett Cass, Jonathan Glass, Heidi Jaarsma, and Kellie Patterson Parry. With none voting in the negative, the motion carried.

Eversource – Public Hearing re: Proposed Tree Removals on Scenic Roads.

*voting: Bill Lipfert, Chair, Scott Baker, Everett Cass, Jonathan Glass, Heidi Jaarsma, Linda Leone for Gail McKenzie, and Kellie Patterson Parry.*

Heidi Jaarsma read the following email from Dane D’Arcangelo, Eversource Arborist:

*Unfortunately because of this tropical storm myself and my representative are both going to be actively engaged with restoring power for Eversource’s customers throughout New England and will not be able to attend tonight’s hearing.*

*I would like to encourage the board to approve the proposed tree cutting in tonight’s meeting however I understand if the board does not choose to do that without a representative present. If it cannot be approved to night please consider continuing the meeting during another day.*

*Thank you,*

*Dane D'Arcangelo*  
*EVERSOURCE*  
*Vegetation Management*  
*Arborist NH West*

Bill Lipfert reviewed RSA 231:158 and the scenic road tree removal process. A utility may not remove trees over 4" DBH without written consent of the Planning Board granted after a duly warned public hearing.

Heidi Jaarsma stated that she had driven the route and had found most of the trees on the list with varying degrees of difficulty. She stated that locating marked trees on Platt Road had been particularly challenging. There were several trees which at first glance seemed healthy, particularly removal #60 on Lang Road; however, upon closer inspection showed that the rot and decay issues given in the Eversource description were accurate. She added that the descriptions seemed accurate throughout. She also noted that removal #3 on Gap Road had blown over in a storm the month before. Ms. Jaarsma stated that although there are several tall pines to be removed on Platt Road, many are dead. She added that removal of the very tall, dead pines on Platt Road by Eversource would serve the Town well. Though many more trees were proposed for removal compared to proposals in years past, Ms. Jaarsma stated that she did not believe approval of the list would significantly change the character of the roads in question.

Caroline Storrs stated that she had two concerns. First, some of the trees did not have tapes on them. She stated that it was very difficult to follow telephone pole numbers as shown on the list. She also expressed concern that the representative from Eversource was not present to answer questions. Without clearly marked trees, Ms. Storrs asked how the Planning Board could know which trees it would be approving. Secondly, Ms. Storrs spoke of the historical heritage represented by tall pines in Cornish, which originally had been known as the Mast Camp. Peter and Caroline Storrs presented several photographs of pines on Platt Road proposed to be removed which were alive and healthy. There followed a discussion that many trees on the list were difficult to locate, particularly on Platt Road. All parties who had attempted to locate each individual tree on the list agreed that proposed removals along Platt Road were not well marked. Heidi Jaarsma said that some larger trees were marked with tape on an adjacent shrub.

Jim Barker had inspected the removals with fellow Conservation Commission members Bill Gallagher and Ricki Poor. He agreed the descriptions given by Eversource were accurate; however, some trees were not marked and other marked trees did not appear to be on the list. Mr. Barker questioned removal #44 and said that he would like to ask the

representative from Eversource the meaning of ‘close to neutral possible equipment change.’ Mr. Barker advocated for an equipment change that could save the tree from removal if that had been the meaning of the language on the list. Mr. Barker also questioned the meaning of ‘close to phase decline’ in the description of removal #69.

Everett Cass stated that the power company did not want to remove any trees unnecessarily trees because it costs them money and noted that it was in the power company’s interest to keep the power on. He stated that the town of Cornish is liable for all trees in the right of way. Not approving this list would transfer the liability to the Town of Cornish. The power company, he continued, was doing the town a service. Mr. Cass said that he looked at what was not marked as much as what was. He supported approving the list and reiterated the danger of hazard trees. He also added that there is an aging population of Cornish which is dependent on electricity for some of their life support.

Caroline Storrs said that she could understand the ash tree removals due to disease and the proposed black and white birch removals. She continued that the pines were part of Cornish heritage, given its history as a mast camp. She presented pictures of the trunk and the canopy of several pines along Platt Road. She cautioned against taking so many pines down. She also remarked that proposed removal #30 and #88 were both healthy and saw no need to take them down.

Barbara Ceislicki said that she was against cutting down healthy trees. Bill Lipfert stated that there are lots of leaning trees on NH 12A and added that he had been surprised at how few trees were slated for removal. He found that all trees flagged by the arborist along NH 12A were imminently possibilities to break off in a storm.

Jim Barker mentioned that the Conservation Commission had discussed public safety versus the trees. He echoed Mr. Lipfert that they Eversource is not proposing removals simply for the sake of taking tress down.

Kellie Patterson Parry asked if there is an Eversource deadline for completion. Eversource was not present to answer the question. Ms. Patterson Parry’s interpretation of the process was that the scenic road review was to give the community the opportunity to see each tree on an individual basis. She wondered if Eversource could provide a map of the telephone poles. She requested that when people take pictures of the tree, the associated removal number from the list would be useful. Bill Lipfert said that an alternative suggestion to the map was to make sure that the trees are in the correct order and to subdivide Saint Gaudens road into upper and lower sections. Jon Glass asked that in addition to an accurate map, he would like a photograph of each tree. Heidi Jaarsma stated that she felt that if the trees were well marked and if the list were in sequential order, the proposed removals could be located much more easily.

Peter Storrs said that he felt that a lot of the tape was off and that the description and pole number was difficult to follow. Mr. Storrs asked for more clarity in identification of proposed removals before the Board made a decision.

Scott Baker stated that being in the Selectmen's office, he has seen the estimates and checks go across the table for removals. He stated that the town has probably spent \$30,000 removing hazard trees in the past few years. The proposed removals on the Eversource list would cost the town close to \$150,000. Peter Storrs stated that the scenic road process was important. Mr. Baker said that he did not disagree.

Jon Glass asked if the trees could be marked with a number. Bill Lipfert questioned the feasibility of doing so. Alternative methods of marking trees were discussed. Heidi Jaarsma advocated that the poles be geographically sequential and noted the use of the word 'across' to indicate that the proposed removal was on the side of the road opposite the poles. Heidi Jaarsma made a motion to continue the hearing to September 3, 2020, and in the interim communicate to Eversource that all trees on the list must be clearly marked with tape around the trunk and the pole list must be broken into road sections and be sequential. Poles numbers should be checked against the removal list and should be marked 'across' when the subject tree is across from pole/wires. Jon Glass seconded the motion. Everett Cass mentioned that Eversource is very busy given the recent tropical storm and associated power outages. He did not approve of dragging the process out. Bill Lipfert called for a roll call vote on the motion. Voting in the affirmative were Scott Baker, Jonathan Glass, Heidi Jaarsma, Linda Leone, and Kellie Patterson Parry. Voting in the negative was Everett Cass. The motion carried 4-1. Barbara Ceislicki stated that she was pleased with the decision.

#### Other Business

Bill Lipfert reviewed recent driveway applications. An application on East Road at the old Sullivan Farm on the west side was approved.

An application on Harrington Road that had been submitted previously was rejected. The applicant has contacted the Board to see what alternative possibilities were. Scott Baker asked regarding the driveway regulations. Alternatives driveway arrangements were discussed. Heidi Jaarsma asked if the parties involved could meet to discuss a solution before it was brought to the Board.

Scott Baker asked the Board for review and comment for the use of a portion the Class VI section of Jonesville Road is proposed as a driveway. The Board requested that they use as little of the Class VI road as possible before the driveway veers off. The Board discussed the provision of a driveway permit. Heidi Jaarsma reviewed RSA 674:41 and the need for a waiver of municipal liability to be filed at the Registry of Deeds before a building permit is issued.

Heidi Jaarsma asked that the Selectboard find out the completion status of the cell tower on Burr Road. Heidi Jaarsma will give Mr. Chiannis' contact information to Mary Curtis.

Adjournment

Scott Baker made a motion to adjourn. Everett Cass seconded the motion, and Bill Lipfert called for a roll call vote. Voting in the affirmative were Scott Baker, Everett Cass, Jonathan Glass, Heidi Jaarsma, Linda Leone, and Kellie Patterson Parry. With none voting in the negative, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heidi Jaarsma