



CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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MINUTES OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, January 16, 2019 – 7:00 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

Members Present: Bill Bilodeau, Laura Byergo, Joe Fedora, Sarah Rowe

Members Absent: Chip Hussey

Chair Byergo opened the Conservation Commission meeting at 7:05 p.m. A roll call was taken by the Chair; she announced a quorum was present and the meeting was being recorded.

1. Welcome: Joe Fedora, New Member

Chair Byergo introduced and welcomed Joe Fedora as a new member of the Conservation Commission.

2. Approval of Receipts and Invoices

Receipts were not included; this item was continued to the next meeting. Chair Byergo received a quote from Snow Hawk for completing the bridge; it has been approved by the Selectmen.

3. Draft: Town Report

Chair Byergo gave members a draft copy of the Conservation Commission's page for the Town Report. Several items were discussed to possibly be included.

MOTION: S. Rowe moved to approve the draft for the Town Report with changes noted as discussed. Second – J. Fedora; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

4. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: B. Bilodeau moved to approve the minutes of Wednesday, November 14, 2018. Second – S. Rowe; two in favor, two abstain (L. Byergo, J. Fedora). MOTION CARRIED

5. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

6. Other Business

Communication with Other Groups: S. Rowe connected with the Newmarket Conservation Commission on Facebook. They both agreed that December and January are a little crazy. However, as things are happening in the spring, they would like to pass information back and forth, sharing ideas.

There is a quarterly meeting of seacoast area Conservation Commissions. Jay Diener, Hampton Conservation Commission Chairman, sends Chair Byergo notices. Newmarket, Rye, North Hampton, Hampton and Portsmouth attend the meeting. Issues facing the area and State-wide Conservation Commissions are discussed. Chair Byergo felt it was very useful.

Sunday, January 13, 2019 Rye had a tailgate party to introduce and get people out to see their new trail. Members thought it would be a good idea for Greenland to hold a tailgate party when the Greenland trail was complete. Chair Byergo was hoping to complete the trail in the spring so an official opening could be held during the summer or fall. Additional signage is needed.

Rich Collins, Post Road, introduced himself to members. He's involved with Trout Unlimited and has done work for the Great Bay Estuary. He's also worked on the Great Bay Stewards website. The land behind the Weeks trails has been posted; it's privately owned land. B. Bilodeau stated there is a stipulation that the land can't be developed. Chair Byergo added there was a conservation easement on the land; it was supposed to be managed for an open meadow habitat and mowed. R. Collins stated he is interested in conservation issues and wants to get involved. Chair Byergo commented that there is space available on the Conservation Commission; they can have five to seven members and welcome new members. She explained that he would need to fill out an application and then meet the Board of Selectmen at one of their meetings to be appointed. He would also need to be sworn in by the Town Clerk.

February Meeting: S. Rowe told members that she would need to travel to a conference with her husband and would be away during the February 13, 2019 meeting. A quorum of members will be present; the date will not be changed. J. Fedora asked if members could participate by phone if they were unable to attend a meeting. Chair Byergo responded that the Town has a policy that members cannot attend a meeting by phone.

B. Bilodeau would like to have a notice posted on the Town sign that members are needed. Chair Byergo suggested the Conservation Commission do more to use the Town's Facebook page.

Warrant Article: The Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen have recommended the Conservation Commission warrant article in the amount of \$10,000. J. Fedora stated when it was presented at the public hearing on Thursday, January 10, 2019 there were no comments or questions. Chair Byergo noted a short phrase in the explanation of the warrant article in the Voter's Guide that needed to be deleted.

UNH Presentation on Bobcats: J. Fedora attended a lecture about bobcats at UNH. The gentleman giving the lecture has been studying bobcats for six years. There was information about where bobcats live, what they eat, their migration patterns and how things have changed. Bounties on bobcats stopped a number of years ago, and the population is starting to increase. The main diet in this area consists of squirrels and rabbits. Bobcats try to avoid confrontations with people. They like hilly terrain. At one time UNH had a tagging program using electronic collars, but they were expensive. Chair Byergo suggested the Conservation Commission hold a discussion about bobcats or post the information on

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Facebook. J. Fedora added that meadow habitats similar to Van Etten Drive are conducive to bobcat wildlife. They prefer mixed habitat and don't like just the deep forest.

Rails to Trails Program: J. Fedora commented that at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on February 07, 2019 an RPC representative was present to discuss the Rails to Trails program. Funds are available to facilitate the fairly significant work that would be needed on Greenland's portion of the trail. Area towns would have to commit to annual maintenance on the trail. The project would not move forward unless all the towns make a commitment. The Selectmen voted to approve the Rails to Trails program. Chair Byergo stated that the trail she knows about is off of Breakfast Hill Road. J. Fedora added that part of the trail goes by Coakley. Fencing will be put up so dogs and horses wouldn't drink the water. He was unsure of trailhead parking. Chair Byergo asked who the Town envisioned would be doing the maintenance work. J. Fedora responded the Board didn't make a decision. S. Rowe stated that Rails to Trails has worked very well in Connecticut, and many people use the trail. Chair Byergo will do some follow-up.

Thompson Brook Trail Notes: Chair Byergo stated that on the Cushman side of the trail, there are one or two dead trees in the Town right-of-way that may need to come down; Conservation Commission money will be used for removing those trees. The right-of-way that's been cleared at the end of Coastal Way will probably grow back in; she would like to see something more planned. Chair Byergo stated a resident on Van Etten Drive sent an email saying they were not happy with the brush work on the bank and felt they were much more exposed to traffic on Rt. 33. It shouldn't be a problem when things start growing back in. Chair Byergo is working on plans for native species plantings in the Van Etten and Coastal Way areas, including some privacy screening for two houses. She will contact UNH to have the plan reviewed. If a larger planting is being done, pricing may be better. At the Selectmen's meeting in December Chair Byergo told the Board that the plan Chip Hussey had in mind hadn't gone through the Conservation Commission; she was unable to approve it at that time. She felt there was some disappointment because money couldn't be locked down at that meeting. Chair Byergo will develop a draft plan for Van Etten and Coastal as well as tree removal on Cushman.

There are still wet areas on the Cushman side of the trail; it was suggested gravel be used. Larry Day has indicated he might be interested in setting up a Trail Committee; Chair Byergo will contact him. He may also have some ideas on what could be done that is less expensive and less hardscaping. Chair Byergo suggested using tree stumps to narrow the path.

Tree Seedling Give Away: The Conservation Commission will do another tree give away this year on a Saturday in April. Chair Byergo suggested members look at the NH State Nursery catalog online and make suggestions. Last year the bushes went better than the conifers. More diversity is a little better. She also suggested a volunteer drive on the same day. She asked members to consider campaigning to be a Tree City USA; the Conservation Commission would receive a budget for planting and maintaining trees in Greenland. Chair Byergo encourage members to look at the Tree City USA website for possible discussion in February.

Ideas for the Winnicut River: Funding has been set aside under a 319 grant to improve water quality in the Winnicut River. The Town can apply for the funding to implement projects recommended in the management plan. Doing something major would mean a second 319 grant process for additional funding for projects to help the Winnicut River. Chair Byergo suggested taking on the role of gathering Stratham, North Hampton and DES to go after a second 319 grant. She felt that would be two years down the road after the trail was complete. Chair Byergo encouraged members to look at the management plan for the Winnicut River for possible discussion in February.

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Adjournment

MOTION: B. Bilodeau moved to adjourn at 8:04 p.m. Second – S. Rowe; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, February 13, 2019 – 7:00 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room

Respectfully Submitted: Charlotte Hussey, Secretary to the Boards

Approved: 