



CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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MINUTES OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, July 10, 2019 – 7:00 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

Members Present: Bill Bilodeau, Laura Byergo, Joe Fedora, Joe Russell

Members Absent: Rich Collins, Chip Hussey

Chair Byergo opened the Conservation Commission meeting at 7:00 p.m. A roll call was taken by the Chair; she announced a quorum was present and the meeting was being recorded.

1. Update: Trail Maintenance and Trail Committee

Chair Byergo introduced Jason and Matthew; she had gone out on the trail with them. Matthew is an Eagle Scout with Troop 164 in Portsmouth, and he presented his proposed Eagle project to members. His project will focus on the first loop of the trail closest to the main entrance. He plans to clean up the trail and lay mulch down where needed to prevent erosion. He will also add two trail signs: one for the location of the trail and one to indicate the trail turning so people don't go onto private property. In addition, he will put down five bog bridges in muddy areas. The bog bridges will be made of white oak, which allow them to last longer. The base will consist of 2' x 6' pieces and 4' x 4' pieces for the supports. A temporary railing will be added in the area that was cut too short so people will stay to the side to allow the grass to grow back. Chair Byergo explained it was the area where the brontosaurus cut below grade and it's always wet in the spring. She wanted people up and out of the cut, walking along the edge. Because it's an obvious trail, people needed to be guided up and around so they wouldn't continue to walk in that area.

Matthew will be leading his troop and any volunteers. The mulch will be brought in with the help of a Conservation Commission member. Matthew explained he will be using a design similar to what has been done before. There will be supports in the middle of the planks that are 8' or longer; there is a 7' and 20' bridge. He decided not to do the hillside steps; it would have been too much to accomplish for his Eagle project.

Chair Byergo stated very specific places have been outlined and measured; they are marked by orange flags. Matthew will meet with the Eagle Board on August 14, 2019. He'll start fund raising after that date and execute the project. He's hoping to start between mid-September and mid-October. Matthew explained the fund raising process for the project. He will ask volunteers to bring any tools that are needed. Jason further explained that a formal plan had to be presented to the local troop. Once he gets their approval, the Conservation Commission will need to sign off on the project. Members felt it was a great plan and would be an asset to the trail.

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Larry Day arrived at the meeting. He gave members a brief background. He understood the Conservation Commission was looking for someone to monitor the trails as well as rely on to help maintain the trails. He didn't want to get into detailed conversations but would give reports periodically. He wanted to help with the trails, including the Weeks Brick House trails and the Rail Trail project with the State. L. Day stated he was willing to act as the Trail Coordinator. Chair Byergo will discuss liability with the Board of Selectmen; L. Day will present it to the Compliance Department at Edward Jones (his employer), list it as an outside activity, and get their approval. He has to let them know the Boards he is on, any outside activities, the potential liability, etc.

Chair Byergo questioned his level of commitment: does he plan to organize volunteers or will he be the "go-to" guy. His response: if he was told the Conservation Commission needed to spread 500 yards of loam and move 50 rocks; he would get it done. If it was something real big, he would get in touch with a few people and organize the project. Chair Byergo would provide a list of contacts. L. Day would provide a report to the Conservation Commission on an agreed upon date.

MOTION: B. Bilodeau moved to accept Larry Day's offer to act as Trail Coordinator for the Conservation Commission. Second – J. Fedora; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

2. Update: Easement Monitoring, Intern

Chair Byergo introduced Michael Thompson to the Conservation Commission. M. Thompson is a UNH graduate and recommended by Matt Tarr. M. Thompson briefly reviewed his background.

Chair Byergo and M. Thompson will be meeting on Thursday to review the areas to be monitored. A group monitoring of the Weeks Brick House Trails has been done in the past; the Conservation Commission could do that as a project. Interested members should email Chair Byergo.

Chair Byergo will do a few of the easements with M. Thompson; however, he will do the majority using the app. Chair Byergo explained that the primary issue with the easement monitoring is to make sure people are not misusing it, trespassing, camping, etc. They also get to know the area, the wildlife, the value, evasive species, etc. The Conservation Commission has some management responsibilities.

3. Update: Van Etten Open Space Donation and Funding

Chair Byergo updated members that the Board of Selectmen approved the donation from Barry Posternak. The budget, which included money to re-grade the bank, was also approved. Mowing, re-grading and tree planting were also part of the approved budget. Chair Byergo received a quote for re-grading from Don Delisle. Don Delisle will donate his time and the contractor will bring in his equipment; they will try to do the re-grading for \$1,200.

4. Update: Wetland Permit, #19 Birch Point

Chair Byergo updated members on 19 Birch Point, which was hastily reviewed and approved at the June meeting. The homeowner planned to upgrade their house and the riprap on the point. The Conservation Commission didn't ask about the septic system at that meeting. Chair Byergo attended the June Planning Board meeting; 19 Birch Point was discussed. The homeowner didn't know where the septic system and leach field were located. The Planning Board asked them to return with more information on the septic as well as try to do something with the roof line and storm water runoff. 19 Birch Point will be returning to the Planning Board on Thursday, July 18, 2019 (NOTE: 19 Birch Point has

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requested a continuance to the August meeting). The Conservation Commission will not review it again unless something major happens. Chair Byergo discussed the DES wetlands application and their requests for additional information from the homeowner.

B. Bilodeau was not at the June Conservation Commission meeting and questioned if the engineer for 19 Birch Point attended. Normally, the septic system is on the plan. He understood that the entire property was within the 100' wetland setback; the septic tank and leach field are in violation. Chair Byergo agreed, adding it was grandfathered. B. Bilodeau stated that building a five bedroom house would require him to change his septic design. Chair Byergo noted that old camps are grandfathered; however, when a major reconstruction is done, there may be a chance to do something.

5. Receipt Approval: Banner, Trail Build Day Volunteers

R. Collins submitted a receipt in the amount of \$37.99 for the banner used at the seedling give-away.

MOTION: J. Fedora moved to approve reimbursement to R. Collins for the banner used at the seedling give-away in the amount of \$37.99. Second – J. Russell; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

J. Fedora submitted receipts for supplies for the seedling give-away.

MOTION: J. Russell moved to approve reimbursement to J. Fedora. Second – B. Bilodeau; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

6. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: J. Russell moved to approve the minutes of Wednesday, June 12, 2019. Second – J. Fedora; three in favor, one abstain (B. Bilodeau). MOTION CARRIED

7. Other Business

The date for the boat ride with the Piscataqua River and Great Bay Waterkeeper has been scheduled for Thursday, September 05, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. The rain date will be Friday, September 06, 2019.

B. Bilodeau asked about the possibility of the Conservation Commission being an elected body rather than appointed by the Selectmen. He thought other towns in the area elect their Conservation Commission members. Chair Byergo responded that the RSA would be the first place to look. (Note: a link to the RSA has been sent to members: <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/III/36-A/36-A-3.htm>). Responding to J. Fedora, B. Bilodeau stated that the advantage to an elected board was that the Selectmen wouldn't be telling the Conservation Commission what to do. J. Russell added that he did not think the Conservation Commission could be an elected body. B. Bilodeau stated that the Cemetery Committee, consisting of three people, is elected and has the final say in any action. Chair Byergo noted that a major role of the Conservation Committee is to be an advisory board vs. the Cemetery Committee which has a job to do (note: the Cemetery Committee is actually Cemetery Trustees). The Conservation Commission has a direct relationship with Selectmen and Planning Board; the RSA speaks to the Commission's relationship with the Selectmen.

J. Fedora stated that there was a discussion at the Selectmen's meeting about the removal of trees at Cushman Way. Chair Byergo stated that two professionals had suggested they try fertilizing the trees; she felt the Selectmen agreed with that suggestion. She noted C. Hussey was concerned about liability

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to the Town if the trees came down and if the abutting homeowner would accept the responsibility; she will check with them. Chair Byergo would like one more professional to look at the trees and will talk to the neighbors.

8. Adjournment

MOTION: B. Bilodeau moved to adjourn at 7:49 p.m. Second – J. Russell; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, August 14, 2019 – 7:00 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room

Respectfully Submitted: Charlotte Hussey, Administrative Assistant