



CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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MINUTES OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, March 11, 2020 – 7:00 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

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

Members Absent: Chip Hussey

Chair Byergo opened the Conservation Commission meeting at 7:10 p.m. A roll call was taken by the Chair; she announced a quorum was present and the meeting was being recorded.

1. Pat Tate, NH Fish & Game Wildlife Biologist: Coyote Natural History

Pat Tate, NH Fish and Game Wildlife Biologist, addressed the Commission and discussed Eastern Coyotes.

2. Reorganization of the Board

MOTION: J. Fedora moved to appoint B. Bilodeau as Vice Chairman of the Conservation Commission. Second - R. Collins; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: B. Bilodeau moved to appoint L. Byergo as Chairman of the Conservation Commission. Second – J. Fedora; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

Chair Byergo asked that members consider “changing it up” next year. She did not feel the same people should be the Chairman and Vice Chairman all the time.

3. Wetland Permit: Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve - Osprey Pole

The Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve would like to put a pole out with a camera for their osprey nests. This will be an expedited permit. R. Collins has worked with the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. They need something stable to put the camera on to display the nest in the center; it has to be done before the osprey comes in. Chair Byergo, reading from the permit, stated that “the goal of the proposed project is to install a 20 ft. wooden pole in the salt marsh, in front of the Great Bay Discovery Center, on which an osprey platform and camera will be installed”. The new pole will allow access to the nest and camera. Visitors will be able to view the nest inside the Discovery Center and online.

J. Fedora commented the permit was well-documented and complete.

MOTION: Chair Byergo moved to authorize signing the expedited minimum impact wetland permit application. Second – B. Bilodeau; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

4. Planning Community Outreach Events

Seedlings: The seedling order will need to be submitted before March 31, 2020. Chair Byergo suggested the same as last year, getting a variety of the winter survival, wetland, and backyard bird packages and maybe some trees. B. Bilodeau stated the crabapple trees were popular. White pines were not as popular. J. Fedora felt the variety may have been too confusing for people and recommended keeping it simpler. R. Collins suggested separating the options based on the packages. Chair Byergo noted the specific packages available were winter survival, native species, songbird/wildlife, and wetlands. The wetlands and native packages would be appropriate for Greenland. Winter survival and songbird were done last year.

Seedlings would be available during the second week in April, shipping them to Rockingham County or picking them up from the nursery. Chair Byergo suggested an event date of mid-April or the first week of May. The event should be done within days of picking up the seedlings.

Survey: Members briefly discussed the survey J. Russell prepared for community feedback regarding issues specific to climate change and general conservation/environmental concerns. He was hoping to have the survey “go live” for the seedling event using Survey Monkey. The free program was limited to nine questions; eight were included on the survey.

Data will help identify what residents are concerned about. Hopefully, the Conservation Commission will be able to have some interaction with citizens. In addition, the Selectmen will be advised of the survey results. A speaker may be able to be arranged for a presentation to the public. “Make yourself more climate change resilient” could be implemented in the Town. Chair Byergo asked that “groundwater rise” be included under Item 2 on the survey. Health of Great Bay would include septic systems, run-off, nitrates, etc. It was suggested that the zip code be included on the survey. J. Russell thought tracking the area in Town would be helpful (similar to the Planning Board survey).

Distribution of the survey was discussed. The original discussion was to give it to residents at the seedling event. Adding it to the Town website was also suggested. Further discussion was continued to the meeting on Wednesday, April 08, 2020.

Trout Unlimited Fingerling Program: R. Collins briefly mentioned the lack of means for community communication. Chair Byergo has added members to the Greenland Residents Conservations e-mail list. R. Collins noted that Face Book is no longer useful for most groups or people to promote information. He added there is a teacher at Greenland School that has done a TU Trout in the Classroom program. A fish tank is brought in; TU supplies a chiller to keep the water temperature low. Trout eggs are also brought in from the State. When the eggs hatch, students watch the growth process. The trout are eventually released into the wild. R. Collins thought it would be a good idea to do it in the Pickering Brook area. He has talked with the teacher at Greenland School and taken pictures. The response from the students has been positive and would be a nice community event. The teacher said they plan to release the trout into the Winnicut River; the State only allows certain release locations. It is part of the STEM program at the school. R. Collins was hoping the Conservation Commission could help promote the program.

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Chair Byergo told members that as part of the STEM program at Portsmouth High School, students were learning how to test water quality. C. Hussey had suggested that the Conservation Commission may want to work with Portsmouth and develop a program for the students to do water quality sampling in the Winnicut River. Chair Byergo would like to discuss this with the Town Administrator to see if it would help the Town meet its MS-4 obligations. The Conservation Commission could help the Town with its MS-4 community outreach obligations and water quality testing.

Tides: J. Fedora noted there is an extremely low-level tide Thursday, April 09 and Friday, April 10, 2020. He will try to take pictures of the water line in the channel. B. Bilodeau stated the tide is very, very low currently. High tides are expected in April and May.

5. Other Business

Chair Byergo has checked with Matt Tarr about a student intern. He does have a student who is looking for a summer intern job; Chair Byergo has reached out to her. Chair Byergo is hoping North Hampton may be able to provide additional names.

6. Approval of Minutes

Approval of minutes was continued to the next meeting.

7. Adjournment

MOTION: B. Bilodeau moved to adjourn at 8:54 p.m. Second – J. Russell; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, April 08, 2020 – 7:00 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room

Submitted By: Charlotte Hussey, Administrative Assistant