



CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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MINUTES OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, November 11, 2020 – 7:00 p.m. – Virtual via Zoom

Members Present: Laura Byergo, Rich Collins, Joe Fedora, Brad Lajoie, Joe Russell, Lloyd Ziel

Members Absent: Bill Bilodeau

Also Present: Courtney Johnson

Chair Byergo opened the Conservation Commission meeting at 7:04 p.m. A roll call was taken; it was announced a quorum was present and the meeting was being held virtually through Zoom and recorded by audio. A checklist to ensure meetings are compliant with the Right-to-Know Law during the State of Emergency was read into the record by Chair Byergo.

Attendance was taken by roll call: L. Byergo – present, R. Collins – present, J. Fedora - present, B. Lajoie – present, J. Russell – present, L. Ziel - present.

1. Old Business: In Person Meetings, Trail Opening Event, Drought Conditions

In Person Meetings: After a brief discussion, meetings will continue to be held through Zoom.

Trail Opening Event: The main purpose of holding a trail opening event would be to let more Greenland residents know about the trail. Chair Byergo suggested she could lead a walk for the Greenland Women's Club. An option would be to hold more than one event. Chair Byergo suggested someone use the trails for cross-country skiing or to snowshoe and report to members. J. Fedora suggested Matt Tarr or another speaker to talk about the trail. L. Ziel mentioned that if the opening were held in the spring it could be done in conjunction with the 300th Anniversary. B. Lajoie mentioned holding the event in conjunction with Earth Day (April 22, 2021). L. Ziel has offered to draft some stories about the Town's conservation areas and to bring attention to the resources available in Town. A trail map is available. Chair Byergo reminded members she was trying to get a good price from Zack's Signs to post the trail map at the Liberty Hill parking lot. The map can also be added to the Town website and the Facebook page. L. Ziel is working with the 300th Anniversary Committee. Further discussion was continued to the December meeting.

Drought Conditions: Chair Byergo noted that this area is still in a drought. J. Fedora has contacted the Town Administrator about the drought conditions. Neighboring towns have implemented water restrictions. J. Fedora has suggested to the Town Administrator that mandatory restrictions be put in place. The Town Administrator was going to bring it the attention of the Board of Selectmen. There is a message on the Town sign. DES has updated the drought map on their website. The lower portion of Rockingham County along the coast is considered to be in a moderate drought. The middle, where Greenland is located, is considered to be in a severe drought. DES does offer water saving tips that have

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been posted on the Town website. J. Fedora recommended the message stay on the Town sign. He continued it was a real concern and it has been suggested there could be a multi-year drought.

According to DES, the recent rain did not have any appreciable effect on the drought. There was continued discussion regarding the drought. Chair Byergo suggested J. Fedora check the Town's Facebook page and comment on the post.

Safety Zone Signs: B. Lajoie questioned if anyone had followed up with getting more signs. He would like to complete that task, trying to stay as consistent as possible according to Fish and Game posting standards (every 50 yards for the safety zone). Chair Byergo stated she was a little torn between having enough signs posted to raise awareness and having enough signs to make it legally effective. She added that every 50 yards seemed claustrophobic with signs. B. Lajoie stated that the goal was to make people aware of the trail and its location in relation to where they may be hunting. Chair Byergo will contact Fish and Game about more signs.

2. Other Business

King Tide: The Portsmouth Herald had a recent article about the New Hampshire King Tide Contest. The dates of the projected King Tide are November 16th and November 17th. J. Fedora stated that the highest scheduled tide for the year is Monday and Tuesday. The contest opens November 14th and closes on November 17th. Chair Byergo suggested that rather than doing a photo of Greenland's high tide mark, a photo could be taken of the Rt. 33 bridge looking at where high tide hits the fish ladder. That spot is an infrastructure vulnerability. The contest is open to anyone and is run by the Coastal Adaptation Work Group. J. Fedora will discuss arrangements with Chair Byergo.

Drain Markers: The drain markers done several years ago to point out one that drain directly to the Bay have faded. Similar conservation easement markers placed on trees in the Falls Way subdivision are missing and need to be replaced.

Trail Walk: L. Ziel and C. Johnson will do a trail walk with Chair Byergo.

3. Annual Review, Report

The Annual Report is normally due in January. Chair Byergo will draft the report. B. Lajoie suggested someone shadow Chair Byergo to learn how the report is done. Chair Byergo agreed she could send an early draft to members. A group picture will also need to be done. B. Lajoie suggested a photo be taken during different seasons.

4. Training Opportunities

Chair Byergo reminded members that there are online training opportunities available during COVID. The NH Association of Conservation Commissions lists directly relevant resources ('Resources' button on the left side of their home page). The Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is another source that does training for children as well as adults, and specifically for municipal officials. Members will need to sign up for notifications; joining the Great Bay Stewards would also help. The Coastal Adaptation Work Group provides training. The New England Wildflower Society has information about building meadows or using native species, etc. Fish and Games also offers training opportunities. B. Lajoie stated there is a New Hampshire Outdoor Learning Center geared more towards fishing and outdoor activities.

5. Looking to 2021

Natural Resources Inventory: Chair Byergo explained this was a community project and done through a mediated process with UNH and RPC in 2010. She was informed by UNH that the Town is due for another inventory. She felt it would be useful: it is over ten years old and there has been development in Town. The process brings in the whole community, there are new analytical tools as well as flood and wildlife maps available, and it would help engage the Conservation Commission with the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board. Chair Byergo has asked some of the Selectmen to talk to the Conservation Commission about looking more strategically at the conservation land in Town.

Chair Byergo felt updating the Natural Resources Inventory would be worth the effort. Community outreach and additional meetings may be required. She asked members for recommendations on the areas in Town that should be considered for conservation as well as what could be done with the existing land.

Members liked the idea of land use projects. Many people did not understand what land was Town-owned or public. J. Fedora questioned the role of the Planning Board. Chair Byergo responded it was a matter of awareness, education, and sensitivity. The more consensus there is in Town of the land that needs to be protected and why, the more support there would be from the Planning Board in terms of the open space regulations. That would also include the Zoning Board of Adjustment. J. Fedora stated it would require a lot of hard work. He continued that at a recent Planning Board meeting there was discussion about the problems on Rt. 33. A comment was made that the State's priorities were not in proper alignment because too much money was being allocated to greenways and not enough to dealing with traffic.

Chair Byergo noted there is conservation land next to the ballfields that could be used for a trail. There are items (500-gallon drum) that need to be removed. There are things that can be done to open up some of the conservation land to people in Town. It would help connect people to the Town.

The Natural Resources Inventory can be found by clicking on this link: <https://nhnriguide.org/natural-resources-inventories>.

J. Russell suggested having the survey results available when meeting with the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board about initiatives. The results would show that residents have expressed concerns and desires for these things. The results of the Planning Board survey indicated that residents were interested in some additional recreational activities in Town.

6. Other Business

Open Space Ordinance: J. Fedora updated members that the Planning Board is in the process of amending the Open Space Ordinance. He recommended the Conservation Commission review the Ordinance. The proposed amendments should be looked at very closely. B. Lajoie recommended individual members request a copy of the proposed amendments – strength in numbers. Chair Byergo explained that there would be a public hearing and if approved, it would be included in the warrant articles.

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Berg Easement Request to Greenland: Chair Byergo briefed members on the Berg easement request. She plans on asking the Board of Selectmen to reconsider the decision not to accept the easement.

7. Approval of Minutes

Approval of minutes was continued to the December 09, 2020 meeting.

8. Adjournment

MOTION: L. Ziel moved to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. Second – J. Fedora; roll call vote: R. Collins – yes, J. Fedora – yes, B. Lajoie – yes, J. Russell – yes, L. Ziel – yes. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, December 09, 2020 – 7:00 p.m., Zoom

Submitted By: Charlotte Hussey, Administrative Assistant