

Note: These minutes were amended and approved by the Conservation Commission on March 4, 2021.

Members present: Marla Binzel, Ken Jacques

Members present via zoom: Dan Saulnier, Daphne Klein (alternate, activated)

Guests present: Gene Hayes

Guests present via zoom: Stephen Barker

Marla opened the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Minutes: Marla noted that the draft January minutes had the wrong date, which should be changed to 1/7/21. Ken made a motion to approve the corrected minutes. Daphne seconded. The minutes were approved as amended.

Summary of Action Items:

- **Marla to reach out by email to find the best time for a work session for the Natural Resources Inventory.**
- **Dan to contact Colby-Sawyer to see if there is interest in having students help with updating our Natural Resources Inventory.**
- **All members will read the 2008 Natural Resources Inventory (or at least the abstract)**
- **Marla will send around NH DES's tips for reviewing wetland applications.**

Welcoming of Guests

- Gene Hayes of Stonybrook Road came to the meeting to see what we were up to, and to let us know that he is willing to help out with tree potting or other initiatives.
- Stephen Barker is a resident of Springfield who just became a board member of the Eastman Charitable Foundation (which provided our new tree in the Rec Field). Stephen wanted us to know that the Foundation has a variety of grant opportunities focused around education, outdoor recreation, and environmental issues, and has three scholarships annually for students studying environmental science or related disciplines. Marla asked if Stephen could get a list of prior grant projects to provide an idea of project size and scope. Two projects were discussed as potential future efforts: Collins Park and hiking access to Society Lot.

Natural Resources Inventory

- Marla asked about scheduling a work session for renewing our NRI. March was vaguely discussed as an idea. Marla will reach out by email to confirm.
- Our previous NRI from 2018 is available on the Conservation Commission page of the town website, here: <https://www.springfieldnh.org/conservation-commission>
Direct link to the whole report: https://www.springfieldnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf3836/f/uploads/springfield_nri_reportmaps.pdf
- Marla strongly encouraged everyone to read at least the abstract prior to our work session.
- Dan noticed that students from Colby-Sawyer assisted with much of New London's most recent NRI. He will reach out to the school to see if they are interested in helping with ours.

Town Lots

- Ken stated that Brooks Weathers is likely available in late February or early March to cruise the northeast woodlots. Some discussion of nearest approach and visibility of blazes ensued. Seems

doable with snowshoes. Will likely be a 5:30 am start to the day.

- Ken also said that Brooks noticed that only about half the Kinsley lot was logged. It appeared the remaining half is now past due, which means if we're planning to harvest, the time is now. If the northeast lots are deemed to be not ready after cruising, it might be worth moving on Kinsley.

Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund

- Marla introduced this program, and will send around published materials by email. There are two main branches to the program: grants and compensatory mitigations.
- Compensatory mitigation programs can include land preservation, wetland creation, fee payments, and a list of other alternatives that are used when a project proponent demonstrates that they cannot complete their project without some impact to a wetland.
- Dan expressed some skepticism that this could lead to open season on filling wetlands and then doing half-hearted wetland restoration projects. Marla and Ken thought this was unlikely.
- Marla explained that the program is run at the state level. When the state needs to approve a compensatory mitigation strategy, they will check first with the town where the project is located. If the town has qualifying projects on hand, they will be chosen first. If not, projects in other towns of the same watershed are evaluated.
- Marla suggested it's worth putting some thought into this, and developing some projects to have on standby, should the opportunity arise. Replacing culverts could qualify. Ken pointed out that some day in the future the culvert under George Hill Road at the outlet of McDaniel's Marsh will need to be repaired or replaced, and will be a major project for the town.

NHDES Guidance for Reviewing Wetlands Applications

- Marla received (and will forward along) more guidance from the state about how we can better do their job.

Outreach

- Marla placed the order for the Yellow Osier Dogwood seedlings. Emily had previously offered to pot them up, and Marla to water them. Perhaps Gene Hayes can get involved, too.
- Marla mentioned the seedlings in her write-up for the 2020 Springfield Annual Report, figuring it might reach a different audience than our usual outreach efforts.

Zoning, Planning, and Selectboard Reports

- No report from Zoning or Selectboard. Planning Board heard many consultations at the last meeting, and was given an overview of the results of the planning survey.

Communications and Miscellaneous

- Eversource informed Marla that they will be doing maintenance/clearing along the power lines.
- Our NH Association of Conservation Commissions membership has recently been paid. A vigorous discussion ensued about the benefits of paying at the end of one fiscal year versus the start of another. No policy proposal for the timing of future membership dues was advanced.

Correspondence

- The Commission received a letter from the Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF). It contained a map of town-owned lots, that looked incorrect to Marla. She will contact SPNHF to discuss.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Submitted by: Dan Saulnier