

***Minutes of 12/3/20 Conservation Commission meeting, as amended 1/7/21.***

Members present: Dan Saulnier, Tim Fraser

Members present via zoom: Marla Binzel, Daphne Klein, Emily Cleaveland, Ken Jacques

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

**Minutes:** Ken made a motion to approve the minutes of 11/5/20. Tim seconded. The minutes of 11/5/20 were approved as written.

**Town Lots:**

- As agreed at the last meeting, Ken talked to Brooks Weathers about the four town-owned lots in the northeast corner of Springfield. In order to determine whether this is the best time to do a timber harvest on these lots, Brooks will need to get out to the lots to evaluate what species are there and the age of the different species. Once Brooks has a better idea of what is out there, he can suggest some different ways forward.
- Ken suggested a visit to the lots in early January. All CC members are invited to come along, although Ken pointed out that Brooks will be moving quickly. Ken also suggested that Bruce Allen be invited, as he has spent the most time out there. Marla said she will contact Bruce.
- Kinsley Lot: Tim reported that he, Marla, and Daphne spent a couple of hours working on the trail that will connect the dirt road that starts at Cemetery Road to the Kinsley Loop trail. They were able to finish a rough trail that connects to the loop trail, but it still needs more work before people can use it. Tim will continue to work on it when he has time. Marla and Daphne both agreed that when completed, this is going to be a really nice trail.
- Marla and Emily met up to work on the Collins Lot, but the drum that has been used for collecting the rusted debris wasn't there. Marla has asked George to ask Peter to return it to the lot when he is able to do so.

**Wetlands:**

- Marla reported on the wetlands training session that she attended at the virtual NHACC annual conference. DES put in place new rules last December and there have been seven updates since then. DES is still working on improving the process and is actively soliciting help from Conservation Commissions. A number of Conservation Commissions have expressed concerns about developers trying to push projects through without going through the necessary process. The DES representative reviewed the updated rules that impact Conservation Commission permit reviews.
- Conservation Commissions do not have veto power on the application forms. If a CC signs off on an application, the permit can be approved in 10 days. If a CC does not sign off on the application, it can take 25 days to approve it. If a CC has concerns about a project, they can notify DES within 10 days that they intend to investigate the situation, which will slow down the process to 40 days.
- DES is encouraging every Conservation Commission to have a list of potential mitigation projects they would be interested in doing if funds were available. Funding is intermittently available through the Aquatic Mitigation Fund Grant Program, depending upon development projects in the area to compensate for aquatic resources lost due to development.
- Dan asked if Marla knew what the size of these projects could be and if the projects had to be related to wetlands. Marla said she thought the fund was intended for streams and wetlands, but she will find out exactly what would be appropriate projects. She said the NHACC is an excellent resource for questions like these and she will bring more information to the February meeting.

### **Zoning, Planning, Selectmen Reports:**

- Dan said the Planning Board is still working on the noise ordinance and the next big project will be tabulating the information from the Master Plan surveys.

### **Outreach:**

- Emily said that a neighbor had approached her to ask what the process was to become a member of the CC, and she wasn't sure what to tell him. It was suggested that if someone is interested in possibly joining the CC, a good first step is for them to attend a CC meeting to learn more about what we do.

### **Communications and Miscellaneous:**

- **Election of Officers:** Daphne said that she has written a letter to the Select Board to ask if she could be an alternate member of the ~~Select Board~~ Conservation Commission rather than a regular member. She would also like someone else to take over the position of CC secretary.
- Marla, Tim, and Ken all agreed to continue in their roles as officers. Dan said that although he might be able to take on the position of secretary at some point in the future, he is too busy to do so now. Emily agreed to be nominated for secretary.
- Dan nominated the following slate of officers: Chair: Marla; Vice Chair: Tim; Treasurer: Ken; Secretary: Emily. Tim seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Jane Seekamp is still listed as being a CC alternate, but since she hasn't attended a meeting in years, it was suggested that Marla email her to say that the CC assumes she's no longer interested and will remove her name from the list.
- **Natural Resources Inventory:** Marla reported that another takeaway from the NHACC conference was the suggestion that towns who have NRIs that are more than 10 years old should consider updating them. Several state grant resources available to CCs require that their NRI have been updated within the last 10 years. Springfield's NRI was completed in 2007.
- Ken asked how much has really changed since then and did we really want to spend the money to update it. Marla said that there are now many online resources so we wouldn't need to spend money to do some of the updates that would be useful. The workshop Marla participated in during the NHACC Zoom conference provided several resources that CCs can use to develop/update their NRIs. She will bring the information to the January meeting. Ken suggested that a special meeting could be scheduled just for the purpose of reviewing the existing NRI.
- Emily reported that she attended a workshop on turtle conservation at the virtual NHACC meeting and will present information from that workshop at the next CC meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 pm.

Submitted by: Daphne Klein, Secretary

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

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- **Marla will contact Bruce Allen to see if he is interested/available to go out to the town lots with Brooks Weathers and CC members in January.**
- **Marla will email Jane Seekamp regarding her status as a CC alternate.**