

Conservation Commission

May 2, 2019

Memorial Building

7:00 p.m.

Note: These minutes are to be considered draft minutes until approved by the Conservation Commission.

Members Present: Bruce Allen, Marla Binzel, Emily Cleaveland, Tim Fraser, Ken Jacques, Daphne Klein, George McCusker (Selectmen's Rep).

Bruce Allen opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Minutes: The minutes of 4/4/19 were approved as written.

Town Lots:

Collins Park – Tim and Bruce attended a meeting comprised of members of the Conservation Commission and the 250th Committee to discuss plans for Collins Park. The 250th Committee has asked the CC to take the lead as we have permanent standing, whereas the 250th Committee sunsets on 12/31/19. Also, this fits in with the Commission's traditional role of managing and maintaining the natural resources on town owned lands. The 250th requested that a written proposal be drafted that could be presented to the Select Board, as final authority for all plans would ultimately rest with the Selectmen. Bruce presented a draft of such a proposal that he had prepared that entailed near term goals (clearing underbrush to enhance visibility of the Meeting House from 114, removing/killing invasive species, building simple walking bridges across the wet spots), as well as potential long term goals such as stairs from Main St to the Grist Mill site and a bridge from the Meeting house parking lot to the Grist Mill site.

There was an indication of considerable support from the 250th Committee in terms of manpower to assist the Commission in the clearing of the Park. The Midgetts raised a concern about the possibility of burning brush from the cleanup effort, considering the proximity of the site to their house and propane tank. It was suggested that since this would be an activity associated with the Commission and on town property, rather than a private burn, that it might be appropriate to request a member of the Fire Department be present to provide onsite supervision to any proposed brush burning. While it would be most desirable to wait until winter to burn the brush, there may be too much created in an effort to open up the view before OHD, to not dispose of any in the near term. Another option discussed was dragging it up to the road where it could be chipped by the town road crew, although the steepness of the terrain makes that easier said than done. The Commission voted unanimously to accept the plan as drafted by Bruce and to have it brought to the next Selectmen's meeting. Marla's schedule permits, and she will do so.

Invasive Species – Marla indicated that method recommended by the state's Invasive Species Coordinator, Doug Cygan, to deal with Japanese Knotweed is a combination of timed cuttings and applications of herbicide. Only individuals with a Supervisory General Use Commercial Pesticide Applicators License issued by the state can apply chemicals, even RoundUp, on land owned by someone other than themselves. Marla is in the process of obtaining the required license in the event that it is decided to utilize that approach in select location where no other method is deemed viable. She has taken the necessary coursework and is in the process of applying to the state's Division of Pesticide Control to take the exams required to obtain the license. The Commission decided to create an Invasive Plant Subcommittee, initially comprised of Marla and Emily, to begin inventorying the invasives on town lots, prioritizing which situations should be tackled first, and developing plans to be brought to the Commission, and then the Selectman with regard to activities related to invasive plants. It was suggested that a member of the Garden Committee be recruited to be a part of the committee as well.

Outreach:

Green-Up Day – Daphne reported that people have called in with roads that have already been cleaned in advance of Saturday's Green-Up Day.

250th Hikes – Daphne indicated that initial parking will be at Wayside park, and the group will then carpool to the trail head to the Fowlertown Cemetery. She will have maps and handouts about the history of the area available for participants. It was decided to hold the event rain or shine.

NHACC 2020 Statewide Earth Day – Bruce brought forth a request from NHACC to support that organization writing a letter in support of a proposal to initiate planning on a statewide level for 2020 Earth Day activities. There was confusion about specifically what the Executive Director of NHACC was asking for, and the Commission indicate that an email further clarifying the original request would be very helpful. It was also suggested that the original proposal should be less ambitious, as it sounded like an undertaking that exceeded what the commissions in many small towns would be able to accomplish.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by Marla Binzel