

May 2, 2016 – Minutes: UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED

Conservation Commission Meeting
May 2, 2016
5:30 PM, Town Office
Jackson, NH

In attendance: Mark Ross-Parent, member; Tom Seidel, board chair; Margaret Graciano, member; Pam Smillie, member; Brian Byrne, board vice; David Matesky, member

Members of community: Bea Davis; Susan Ross-Parent took notes; Hank Benesh filmed the meeting

Approve minutes of Apr. 4, 2016: extras offered to community. Minutes approved with spelling correction.

Tom: Susan volunteered to be take notes for Conservation Commission meetings. Thanks.

Old Business

Prospect Farm

- Conservation easement – after the last meeting thinking that the area is protected under deed restriction. To consult the town attorney –Margaret says it is paid for out of CC budget. Pam will talk to Peter, Brian asked what does “development plan” mean? That is the plan discussed last month: seems it's pretty well protected. Dave reiterated that it pays to update and check with attorneys to see what's changed. Pam agrees: the attorney can tell us what laws have changed.

Mark: Who was attorney? Rob Upton was 2004 attorney. Need to provide last letter to attorney: Tom will do.

Tom suggested finding out the cost of the town attorney and Pam said she'd look into it.

Margaret will provide info from George Howard to have electronic copy of original letter for attorney.

Brian has questions about 2ndary easement in last minutes.

Margaret and Dave want to be clear on the parameters of prior easement and definition of “public park.” Tom said a development plan would define “park” and its parameters.

Question from Bea: Would the town vote?

Tom answered that the town would vote on it on all changes; the deed restrictions are fairly strong so it would have to go to town meeting.

Bea: asked if Upper Saco Valley Land Trust (USVLT) as a secondary deed holder is still on the table.

Tom said that “not so much any more.”

Margaret said that the town would vote on it going to USVLT or building something up there.

Pam reiterated that they should get Peter's (the attorney) opinion.

Margaret says she'll send email of letter and will. Pam will scan.

Pam/Dave: Questions for the attorney include: how “public park” could be interpreted in different ways and could the land be put up for sale?

Review progress on interpretive signs at Prospect Farm: Margaret has started outline of signs. Will check in with Mike and George, also on sign committee. Deadline per Tom: end of season: 10 signs sent. Margaret: Drafts due by June's meeting. FYI: Prospect Farm Committee: Mark, Brian, Margaret

ACTION: 1. Sign drafts due for June meeting.

ACTION 2: Create advisory draft plan to selectman. 1 or 2 year-long process: goal is 2017 town meeting for management plan (or 2018.) (Decided not to do survey in last meeting)

Jackson Falls – approved minutes to work session with date changed to May 1 and

Big thanks to volunteers!!!

Falls plan – spring and summer work

2016 goals based on 2012.14: action items from Greg Howard of North Country Soil Services
Goals of further work sessions this year will be per intent of 10 action items.

Action item #1: signs for staying on paths, not to litter. We've done this. Revisit?

Discussion about the steep area near the bridge ensued. Mark asked if southbound path to steep area should be closed? Tom said it was steep and dangerous and should close with brush. Bea stated that the steps are horrible near bridge.

Members: Steps are better; mud was worse. Everything is slippery when wet.

Bea asked, "More signs?"

Tom answered that these would be "Don't litter."

Bea stated that people don't read anyway

Dave replied that we have to try.

From Action Plan 2016:

Action item #4 – Will contact road agent, Pat Kelly

Action item #5 – Block and plant seedling in unneeded paths. In paths, chips are aging and blending in better. Discussion whether smaller chip size would be better and worth paying for. Cost? Different appearance with size and color? Better as they age. Brian suggested finding a pile that's aged already but needs to be moved. Margaret asked if compost and chips are the same in #9 where we'll put compost on tree roots? Answer was to keep chips to paths to be clear that paths are paths and compost around roots. Possible chip sources: Ryman, Limmer, Tsoules.

Action item #6 – Scarify soil and plant seedlings. This was done in the May 1st work session.

Compost is needed to seed and mulch with hay. Can we get compost from transfer station? Knotweed concerns – we don't want to bring anything bad in. Hot compost would guarantee no knot weed.

Brian will check with Transfer Station.

Plans for another work session to spread seeds, compost.

Marg: John mentioned having white pine seedlings at his house: could plant those as well.

Good visual barrier, trim to grow up for visual barrier or trim out to block unwanted passage.

Shopping list:

compost

twine

seed

chips

Date for next work session: Margaret would just start transplanting in spare time.

Work session: **June 6th meeting = work session at the falls.**

Mulch with hay for seeds over by lower parking lot and elsewhere.

Action item #10: New Welcome sign needed by handicap spot: (6 original) get 4 more & replace revegetation signs with same material.

Motion: to get 4 welcome, 5 revegetation signs, seed, hay/straw, compost – seconded & approved.

Brian to Bea: got any mulch hay? None left. Mark: try Ann Peterson

2012 action items for falls

Kiosk: put on hold

Area near bridge: Replace string barriers? These were recently removed but people still find scree more tempting to walk down.

Sign category: add overflow parking to JSTF lot on Valley Cross? Hold until parking squared away?
Proposed: residents only on Valley Cross? Should have NO Parking on Valley Cross. Mark can discuss with Pat, road agent.

In all plans: what to do about parking?

Boulders limit parking but no signs.

New corner lot but steep paths still lead to river despite scree, strings, etc.

Goals: consolidate signs: ask to replace "No Parking on Pavement" to "No Parking" on Carter Notch Rd.

Bea asked where would one park?

Margaret answered in lots that exist and encourage dropping people off.

Bea stated that this is a tourist town – will they do that?

Pam said that the falls are overrun.

Tom said that the no parking on Valley Cross is in action plan and approved. No parking on Carter Notch leaves 15 spaces in big lot and corner: where else to park?

Margaret suggesting advertising at hotels and inns about where to park, and an overflow parking sign installed.

Mark asked if the lower falls parking was only for the Wentworth?

Tom has heard that it's the town's or that Wentworth lets folks park there. Not sure which is correct.

Lots of history on Hurlin (SPELLING?) deed.

Brian calculated aloud use of falls with 19 cars with 3 people each, plus walkers as example.

Pam stated that Commission is responding to residents who can't get to falls.

Brian commented that it was a zoo.

Mark reminded that there are national and state park examples of using natural areas with big crowds.

Pam suggested using Enews and hotel and chamber information about where to park.

It's official to park at JSTF on Valley Cross but not the fire pond, plus there are many other spots at PO, Old Town Hall.

Tom asked for the Commission's feelings about a drop-off zone?

Brian is not a big fan of removing a parking spot in the central lot to create room for this.

Margaret asked if we could possibly use the ambulance emergency zone as a drop-off, to think of area like in front of grocery store.

People still park their SUVs in "forest" despite boulders blocking parking under trees and visitors think they can park in ambulance area despite signs, etc.

Actions: signs, advertising, docs to selectmen. What is sent to selectmen should have justifications.

Margaret will write PR to chamber, eNews, hotels...

Group acknowledged that selectmen will need to approve for no parking on Carter Notch Rd. Question as to whether it being a state road would matter.

Dave thought the zoning regs on state 16A may also be a factor.

Fences: Tom stated that the plan is to replace post and string at main parking with split rail cedar for 5-10 years to allow time for seedlings to grow enough to block passage down eroding bank.

Lucy pricing: 10': \$80 for two year investment

Margaret recounted visitors walking through paths blocked by brush and lifting string during work session.

Suggested that cedar rails in handicapped area and near iron bridge be installed to delineate steps instead of steep bank.

Pam mentioned the need to plant something there and asked what will grow? Wintergreen? Or keep fence? Why is bridge walk way closed? Is it being replaced? Maybe town awaiting the state to repair?

Focus on one area for fencing 2016: main parking area

Tom and Brian will measure and get a price for all area and compare costs of partial purchase or fencing for whole project: maybe a price break.

Plant fence on down side of telephone poles or upper side? TBD.

Section 2: Iron bridge area: bridge to telephone pole.

Section 3: steep bank

Picnic tables: one has rotten board. Tom will bring to selectmen to ask town to repair.

Margaret asked who will do the fencing work? Will we get town crew or hire out to do fencing? We need to be sure not to kill new vegetation.

Brian suggested getting vols who know how to do/supervise such work.

Tom: So we'll ask for additional permission.

Gray's Inn – Larry has yet to comment on his retirement pkg. Tree cut on Mystery Loop but not complete – Larry's monitoring work?

Subdivision from Nestlenook: is it duplexes or condos? Existing buildings that back up on our property.

Bea said the plan was available here at town hall

It was in Selectman's minutes for April 28.

Easements – monitor for summer and fall

Carter Notch Meloon Rd: Brian wants to walk, 300 acres of Harvard(?) land by Anderson's

Tom: need letter to send out

Map of town conserved properties on web site: we need to update with new properties

Brian said that USVLT may have made that map.

Wetlands Permits - none this month

New business

Board Chair meeting -

Planning board: get an update for conservation issues in 10 year master plan: at least look at what's being put in, encourage them to keep conservation in mind when zoning – Dick Bennett is chair. Dave will contact Dick.

Passed around easement maps of Jackson.

Easement on Thorn Mountain

Tom opened the idea that the Conservation Commission can drive easement and areas for conservation and public access. The Conservation Commission ten year plan: what can we do for the town as a whole? Keep areas we do recreate in stay open - are we the voice that goes to families to reopen land to public access? Ex. Tin Mtn to Thorn Mtn. To Foster's. Do we want to work on broader vision for town conservation? Will we be better than outside entity?

Tom has looked at this as dues were due to NH Assoc. of Conservation Commissions. Their web site has resources for how to write conservation plan for towns. Nuts and bolts for commissions.

Adjourned 6:45.

As always, the public is encouraged to attend and share their vision for the use of Jackson town properties. Our meetings are typically at 5:30 PM at the town office building on the first Monday of each month

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Ross-Parent
volunteer note taker