

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex
January 18, 2022
Minutes

Present: Thomas Gilmore, Chair; Henry Carrier; Jeff Abbe, Aurel Mihai

Absent: Lyman Cousens, Matthew Burdick; Norman LaPierre

Staff Present: Rose Fife, Recording Secretary, Kearsten O'Brien, Deputy Planning and Community Development Director

Regular Business:

- Open by Chair @ 7:00 pm
- Roll Call by Chair
- Accountant's Report – Forest Fund: \$22,764.86; Conservation Fund: \$87,928.97. Town Line Item Budget: \$1,851.00
- Review Minutes of 12.21.21 – under Old Business “Gerry Bastarache” is the correct name. Next Line should read “This would keep *sleds*”, the next line add the words “*Loop Trail*” after “Dagody Hill”. Page 2, second paragraph should add the word “*unit*” after the word ‘GPS’. A **motion** to accept the Minutes as amended was made by Gilmore, seconded by Abbe, and passed by a unanimous vote.

Membership Applications: O'Brien is in receipt of a membership application from Aurel Mihai. A **motion** to accept Aurel Mihai as a committee member was made by Kaplan, seconded by Abbe and passed by a unanimous vote. O'Brien asked for 2 Conservation members, as well as Aurel, to go before the Select Board this Thursday, 1.20.21, at 6 pm to present this new membership.

Gilmore presented that Alan Hardy would like to join as well, but his application is not yet in. If Hardy joins this committee, they will nominate and elect him as the Chair of the committee and Gilmore will retire from the committee. Gilmore has enjoyed his time with the committee.

Kearsten explained that the committee needs to decide if they would like to elect Hardy as the Chair or someone else that may be interested in becoming the Chair. She also went on to say that Cousens membership is up in March and she will ask him if he wants to be reappointed. Kaplan asked when. Gilmore thought next month. Gilmore explained that they normally elect a Chair at the first meeting of the year, but with circumstances as they are, he'd like to wait. Abbe feels that they couldn't do better for a replacement than Hardy and thanked Gilmore for all his good work. They have done a lot while he has been on the commission. Gilmore noted some of their accomplishments during his tenure included Keegan's easement on Corn Hill Road, Hardy Easement on Water Street, Gilmore's Easement, Morrill Easement on the corner of Long Street and Water Street. They have monitored their easements affectively. They have improved the Town Forest with the help of Charlie Niebling, their Forester. They have done some land clearing and have a good budget because of this forest management and they obtained the Morrill Easement in on the corner of Long Street and Water Street. They also purchased 2 properties on Walker Pond. There will be challenges as they forge ahead to develop the Walker Pond properties. They also converted the Boscawen Village Town Forest to a Town Forest. He thanked everyone for all their hard work.

O'Brien asked if he will be giving his resignation to the Select Board on Thursday. If the Commission would like, they could vote Hardy in as a member tonight and she could get an application in for him. A **motion** to approve Alan Hardy as a member of the committee was made by Gilmore, seconded by Abbe, and passed by a unanimous vote. Gilmore will remain on the committee until such time as Hardy has physically joined the committee and becomes the Chair.

Gilmore is also part of the Upper Merrimack River Advisory Committee and the Contoocook River Local Advisory Committee. He will be resigning from those as well. Kaplan has interest in one of these committees and would like more information. Gilmore will get him information.

Old Business:

- Town Forest Discussion Items – Abbe handed out the new trail maps he received from Avitar. There was discussion regarding the trails being marked in color. They were given 16 trail signs for the price of 12 from the State of NH Correctional Facility. Nate Priesendorfer's client donated to them a GPS unit, free of charge. He would like to accurately locate the snowmobile trail where it crosses Queen Street and where it goes on the north side of the pond. He spoke with the neighbors. With the GPS unit they can find out where they do encroach, if they do. He's hoping by next meeting they will have the final map. They need to start working on trail numbering and intersections. They need signage to get to Queen Street, etc.

O'Brien reported that she ordered the Chestnut trees. They should be in sometime in April. Niebling explained that Chestnut trees require a lot of sun. Abbe thought a good place to plant them would be by the landfill area where this is a lot of sunshine or perhaps by the farmstead. Colby Loop Trail also has an area. Niebling didn't think that would be an optimal place as there is a lot of birch regeneration there. Stanley Balch also suggested to him that they put chicken wire around them.

He is working on getting a letter out to the 20 people on the Trails Committee to possibly have a Spring Fling. O'Brien reported that the Economic Development Committee is trying to get volunteers. They are trying to attract people for the Walker Pond committee, and any other committee.

- Walker Pond Discussion Items – Niebling submitted a rough draft for the Forest Inventory and Management Plan for Walker Pond Lots. He gives an estimate for the standing timber. He made recommendation on management of outdoor recreation as well as some administrative responsibilities. He spent 4 days doing an inventory. This property is a valuable asset. He did some mapping. He documented soils and some of the habitat features. He found interesting the un-fragmented roads. He did 54 sample points using a 2 stage inventory process. It showed sawtimber of 646,663 board feet, 368 tons of softwood pulp and 522 cords of hardwood firewood. The smaller parcel of the 2 is old hard timber. It hasn't been cut in quite a while. Most of the value is on that tract. There is a lot of oak in the 10-14 class. Niebling estimates that the harvesting done was about 35% of the stocking on the 40 acres they harvested. There is quite a bit of Chestnut growing there. The volume is in pine and oak. With hemlock and red maple, black birch and white oak making up the balance. Page 11 has estimates of the values. The total volume has a value of \$171,106. They could go back every 10 years and do another inventory and update their values and volume. Page 12 has a set of recommendations. Possibly have the land designated as a Town Forest to give it a measure of added protection. Have the boundaries re-blazed. It's been 25 to 30 years since it has been done. They are starting to fade. He is suggesting they designate lot 45/74 (the 29 acre piece) as unmanaged natural area. To access that property, you come off the paved section of Chadwick Hill Road and it is a wet mucky area.

Making a roadway in there would be a challenge. Due to the proximity to the old orchard, there is a soup of invasive in there. It is also quite beautiful as you walk along the shore and perhaps it would make a nice picnic spot. This area is past the pump house. Abbe thought they should have a boulder put on the roadway at the pump house. Niebling agreed that it was a concerning area. Abbe also noted that the beaver in the area are flooding the parking near the pump house. Niebling also reported that parcel 45/78, the larger parcel, there is nothing to do out there in terms of forestry for another 12-15 years. There was a fairly good cut that took place 9 years ago. Access: It is accessed off of Chadwick Hill Road on the Webster side. He assumes the bridge was safe to cross in 2011 and 2012, but is questionable for truck and equipment access 10 to 15 years from now. They would need a right of way on the Egounis' land. The only way to get into the property on a public way, is near the Webster line. Recreation: A nice loop trail would be park at the pump house, walk up Chadwick Hill Road to the height of the land and there are 2 roads going in to the right. Walk 150-200 feet and you are on the town land. To do this, they would need a trail agreement with the Egounis'. There is a nice trail that goes to the dam from there. It's about a mile and a half to a two mile loop.

Kaplan wanted to discuss the boat launch and the pump house. He thanked Niebling for doing the Administrative suggestions. Those are valuable. Niebling suggested that the logical place to develop parking is at the pump house and it would be a great place for signage or trail maps. Kaplan asked if the boat launched interfered with private property. Niebling it did not as it was town land. Kaplan asked if they should, or should not, save the pump house. Gilmore has seen a few emails regarding the evaluation of the pump house. The town has accepted and wants responsibility to maintain the dam. Kaplan is more concerned about accessibility. O'Brien could put together a survey and put it in the Friends of Walker Pond Facebook group and possibly get some ideas. They could have Dean Hollins come in and the Fire Chief come in to discuss this. Niebling suggested reaching out to Fish and Game as they have a lot of experience and resources and possibly funding to help pay for the boat launches. Kaplan will reach out to Fish and Game.

Gilmore thanked Niebling for his excellent work on the Management Plan. Abbe asked Niebling what his thoughts were about the ATV trails that go in all directions. How do they manage that? Niebling noted where the main access point is. If the Commission decides no wheeled recreation vehicles, they will need a sign at the access points.

Niebling apprised the Commission that the best time of year to blaze is winter or early spring. Carrier would like to help. Blazing should be done every 7 years. Kaplan would be interested in working with Carrier. Niebling will help.

Kaplan asked O'Brien about a survey. He gave her some ideas to use in the survey. She will draft it and bring it to the next meeting. Kaplan would like to hear, formally, if this building is or not. O'Brien will reach out to Public Works.

New Business:

- Alternate Member Appointment – see above.

Non-Public:

None.

A **motion** to adjourn the meeting was made by Gilmore, seconded by Abbe and passed by a unanimous vote.

- Next Meeting: • February 15, 2022

*Respectfully submitted,
Rose Fife, Recording Secretary*