

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex
June 15, 2021
Minutes

Present: Thomas Gilmore, Chair, Lyman Cousens, Mark Kaplan, Jeffrey Abbe, Henry Carrier and Matthew Burdick. Henry Carrier will be a voting member this evening.

Absent: Norman LaPierre

Guest: none.

Staff Present: Kellee Jo Easler, Planning & Community Development Director.

Regular Business:

- Open by Chair at 7:00 pm
- Roll call by Chair
- Accountant's Report – The Conservation Capital Budget is \$238,313.22. The Forest Fund balance is \$25,774.21.
- Minutes – A **motion** to approve the Minutes of 05.18.21, as submitted, was made by Cousens and seconded by Abbe. Motion passes by a unanimous vote.
- Designate member for Action Items – no action taken at this time.

Public Hearing:

- Public Hearing to take testimony regarding the Disbursement of Conservation Funds for an Easement on property in the **Town of Boscawen**, located at Map 96, Lot 1, off Water & Long Streets, owned by The Robert & Sherri Revocable Trust, 278 North Main St, Concord NH 03301-5053.

There was no one present for public testimony. They expected Brian Hotz from the Forest Society, but he was unable to make it.

This property is known as the Morrill Easement. The land is a large 125 acre parcel on the corner of Water Street and Long Street. There is a pond on it between Boscawen and Webster. It is north of the Gilmore Easement, which is 144 acres that is in conservation. South of that is the Alan Hardy Easement. They have quite a bit of land in that area. Beaver Dam Brook is in that easement area. Financing the property: they joined with the Society for the Protection of NH Forests and they were able to raise money towards it. They received an NRCS grant for \$166,000, an L-Chip grant for \$85,000, a small grant from Merrimack County for \$10,000 and funds from private individuals for \$22,000. Conservation Committee committed \$130,000, but due to other fund raising, they are only required to pay \$104,376.00. That leaves additional money in the Conservation fund. The Conservation Commission should thank the Town of Boscawen and its citizens and the Select Board for all their support during this project.

A **motion** to close the public hearing was made by Gilmore and seconded by Kaplan. Motion passes by a unanimous vote.

A vote is needed to appropriate the required amount of money to finalize the purchase of the easement. A **motion** was made by Gilmore to allocate the funds necessary up to \$110,000 for closing on the Morrill Easement. Motion was seconded by Carrier. Motion carries by a unanimous vote.

Cousens wanted to thank the Chair for doing a great job in acquiring the Morrill Easement.

Old Business:

- Town Forest Discussion Items - Abbe reported. He has been working with Ashton of Avitar for the Town Forest Maps. He wondered if there was a more cost effective way to approach this through Central Planning or another vendor. Gilmore thought Avitar was doing a good job. Abbe explained they were half way done with the maps. Gilmore noted that they have paid Avitar \$1,400 last month. They do have the funds in their account. Easler thought that was a reasonable price. She also noted that once the maps are done, they can run them off in the office and they can laminate them as well.

Abbe explained that currently they have GPS coordinates on some of the skid roads, which will be the main backbone of the trail. His fear is that it has just been he and Niebling working on this project and they should have a few more people involved to get ideas where the trails should be so it's not just his or Niebling's ideas. He wanted it noted that Niebling has been very helpful. He has also done some clipping by the new sign to remove brush. Abbe thought they should get a 'trail advisory board' together. Burdick thought it was possible to get some from the high school to earn community service. Easler explained that their insurance company would like to have a volunteer available to supervise. Gilmore thought that getting the school involved is important. The Boscawen Village Town Forest is adjacent to a school so there is a connection to it. Much discussion regarding the trails from the elementary school.

Abbe visited the Farmstead. John Fife will be mowing this week or next. He will do just the farmstead and truck road edges and then in the fall he will do more. There is a lot of bittersweet out there.

There were about 14 people at Charlie Niebling's walk two Saturday's ago. Interestingly, there none of the people at this walk were there at the first walk. It was all new people.

New Business:

- NHTOA Membership Renewal – Gilmore would like to suggest that they retain their membership. The money to pay for this should come out of their regular town budget line item.

The Penacook Boscawen Water Precinct is having their meeting on June 30th. Easler asked Gilmore to go to represent the Commission. The precinct will be voting on the sale of the land to the Conservation Commission.

Gilmore asked who on the Commission was in the precinct. Kaplan and Burdick are in the precinct and can vote. If voted that they will sell it to the Commission, the Town will take over ownership and maintenance of the dam. The land is not in conservation, but the land purchased by the Commission with their funds cannot be sold. Discussion regarding Walker Pond and whether or not it should be placed into Conservation Easement ensued.

Abbe said he read the engineering report on Walker Pond Dam, which was built in 1965. It is a very low dam, well-built dam. It has easy to access for kayaks. Their biggest issues may be beavers there.

There will be a bill coming forward for the report on the dam. Easler reminded the Commission that they agreed to pay that bill. They will need to put the purchase of the dam in a Warrant Article as it is property outside of the town of Boscawen. Gilmore explained that they will not be taking possession of the dam until after the town meeting next year. The Purchase and Sales states that the purchase price for the dam is \$1.00. Easler explained that Public Works will maintain it. They will put the upkeep into their budget. Gilmore explained that the town asked for an insurance estimate to have insurance on the dam and he felt the price for that policy was excessive. He'd recommend that the Commission recommend that they self-insure the dam. The liability is minimal. Gilmore had spoken with Alan Hardy and this is what Hardy suggested.

There was a report made by an individual of a wetland infraction on High Street. The Commission referred it to Easler who referred it to DES. DES went out and did a site walk on it and they have issued a report and asked the home owner to do several things and it is now in DES's hands. The Commission needs to do nothing further.

Carrier asked where they were with Web Stout marking out boundary lines at the Boscawen Town Village Forest. Web Stout has been in contact with Niebling to set a time to walk the property.

Kaplan asked if they should be engaging the Forest Society in a conversation regarding funding for some potential property that may be up for conservation at some future date.

A **motion** to adjourn the meeting was made by Gilmore and seconded by Cousens. No vote taken.

Next Meeting:

• July 20, 2021

*Respectfully submitted,
Rose Fife, Recording Secretary*