

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

Conservation Commission

Minutes of Meeting- September 17, 2015

Minutes Approved on- October 29, 2015

Present: John Baybutt, Valerie Germain, Jon Manley, Stephen Willette, Joseph MacGregor

Guests: Ben Haubrauch, Scot Heath

Chairman Baybutt called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

1. Minutes

- a. The minutes from the August 20, 2015 meetings were approved as written.

2. Old Business

a. UNH Barry Conservation Camp

- i. Valerie will contact Victoria Marchand to a Conservation Commissioner's meeting to share about her experience at the UNH Barry Conservation Camp.

b. Railroad Trestle

- i. Jon reported that he has seen a trestle with an attached walkway. This may be something to consider.

c. Invasive Species Eradication

- i. Stephen reported that he has seen State workers eradicating invasive species in different locations in town.

- ii. Valerie reported that when she attended the Invasive Species workshop, it was shared that Aquamaster is allowed to be used near wetlands. The Commissioners proposed using a heavy rubbery covering at the VFW in an attempt to eradicate invasive species located there. It was questioned if a controlled burn would eliminate knotweed.

d. Planting in Bruce Edes Forest

- i. The Bridalwreath Spirea has been planted at the VFW.

e. Crotched Mountain Trail Maps & Maintenance

- i. Valerie will contact Ben Haubrauch and Mike Roina to set up a meeting to discuss a trail map to be used by emergency responders.

f. Bennington Fire Department Controlled Burn

- i. Prior to the controlled burn on Town property on Old Stagecoach Rd, the Town is waiting for the deed to be transferred.

g. Crotched Mountain Outreach

- i. Valerie reported that Crotched Mountain Ski Resort is open to any suggestions made by the Conservation Commissioners. Crotched Mountain Ski Resort has given Valerie permission to mark off an area in the spring for the killdeer.

h. Natural Resources Inventory

- i. Valerie has sent out an email to the Conservation Commissioners regarding the Natural Resources Inventory. The information contained in the email will be discussed at next month's meeting.

i. Annual Bruce Edes Walk

- i. The Annual Bruce Edes Walk has been scheduled for September 19, 2015 at 9 a.m. Posters have been posted. Valerie sent home a notice with students who attend Pierce School.
- ii. It was proposed that the Commissioners design and order Bruce Edes Forest t-shirts to be worn at Conservation Commissioner events. This proposal was tabled.

- j. Trees in River
 - i. Jon reported that the Paper Mill has expressed interest in assisting in pulling out downed trees in the river due to stream bank erosion.
- 3. New Business
 - a. Joint Meeting with Francestown Conservation Commissioner and Francestown Land Trust
 - i. Francestown Land Trust member Ben Haubrauch and Francestown Conservation Commissioner Scot Heath met with the Bennington Conservation Commissioners at 7 p.m. In perpetuity, a conservation easement is needed for town forests. The conservation easement allows a land owner to bargain, donate, sell, or give development rights. The Francestown Land Trust has developed a checklist that they utilize for required conditions for the easement.
 - ii. Ben and Scot discussed with the Commissioners how to entice land owners to put land into a conservation easement. The Francestown Land Trust can fundraise and the Francestown Conservation Commissioners can pay for surveys to offset land owner cost. Land owners can use the appraised value of the easement as a charitable donation for IRS federal taxes. As a starting place, Francestown identified areas worthy of protection and then contacted owners to discuss interest in the land. Ben and Scot suggested writing a warrant article to establish a conservation fund. Jon also proposed an article be written for taxes collected for timber and gravel. It is very important to educate citizens of importance of land conservation before warrant articles are voted on.
 - iii. Several parcels located in Bennington near Crotched Mountain were discussed. The boards will work together. Francestown Land Trust and Conservation Commission agreed to share letters and checklists that they utilize.

There being no other business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by

Karen Bartlett
Conservation Commission Recording Secretary