

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

Conservation Commission

Minutes of Meeting- March 23, 2017

Minutes Approved on- April 20, 2017

Present: Valerie Germain, Stephen Willette, Tom James, Jon Manley, Joe MacGregor, Mike Munhall, and John Baybutt

Co-Chair Stephen Willette called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Minutes
 - a. The minutes from the February 16, 2017 meeting were approved as written.
2. Warrant Article- NRI Phase II
 - a. The warrant article for Phase II of the NRI passed. Co-Chair Valerie Germain has contacted Jeff regarding next steps. The Commissioners will follow up with him to review what will be included in Phase II. The Commissioners are interested in contacting the different Town Committees and Frankestown Land Trust to find out what information would be most helpful to be included in Phase II. The Commissioners will propose May 18, 2017 to Jeff to meet with the Commissioners and Town Boards (Selectmen, Water Commissioners, Highway, Planning Board, Zoning Board). When Phase II is complete a copy will be forwarded to the Planning Board to be incorporated into the Master Plan. A formal invitation will be sent to all the Town committees when the community forum is planned.
 - b. The Commissioners had hoped to have the maps created in Phase I available on the Town website. At this time the maps files are too large to have directly on the website. The Commissioners will explore additional ways to have the maps available.
3. Perambulation
 - a. The Commissioners set April 8, 2017 at 9 a.m. at the Bennington VFW for the Hancock-Bennington perambulation. Jon Manley will invite the Hancock Conservation Commissioners.
 - b. Co-Chair Stephen Willette shared with the Commissioners current Bills that are being watched regarding perambulation being physically completed by boots on the ground.
4. Camper Applications
 - a. Mike Munhall updated the camp application and the press release for the local newspaper. Co-Chair Valerie Germain will contact the Harris Center to reserve spots for the week of July 17-21. The application will be available at the Bennington Town Hall, G.E.P. Dodge Library, and the Town website. Co-Chair Valerie Germain will contact the SAU in order to be able to send this home with students entering grades fourth through seventh at Pierce School and Bennington students who attend Great Brook School. Once permission has been approved, Joe MacGregor will contact Great Brook School to find out how many Bennington students attend Great Brook.

- b. The Commissioners voted to continue to allocate money in the future for the purpose of sending children to camp.
5. Earth Day
- a. The Earth Day event is scheduled for April 29, 2017.
 - b. The Commissioners are planning on kicking the event off with a breakfast. Co-Chair Stephen and Joe will set up the tent for the event. Mike will complete the shopping. Co-Chair Valerie will contact Doreen at the Monadnock Paper Mill.
 - c. The Commissioners would like to incorporate an educational side to the Earth Day clean-up. Jon will contact Douglas Cygan to invite him as a presenter for invasive species.
 - d. Mike asked if safety vests would be available to those cleaning up the roadsides. There may be some vests available. Participants are asked to wear bright colors.
 - e. The Commissioners considered awarding a prize for the most unusual item found during clean-up.
6. Jon informed the Commissioners that there are eagles nesting on the island on Powder Mill Pond. Jon invited interested Commissioners on a hike to the heron rookery in Hancock.
7. Joe shared that he had located the Conservation Commission in Concord. He was able to receive a copy of part of the NH Fund Guide.
8. Joe has received several inquiries regarding the gravel pit on Route 31. It is owned by Hardwicks. The Planning Board met with the Hardwicks. The Hardwicks were granted the rights to the 6-acres that is currently being excavated. Joe and Jon are currently working on finding the wording that would allow the Conservation Commissioners to receive some of the unanticipated funds for timber and gravel tax. Joe has received from Dee French reports for the last five years that show the amount of taxes that have been collected. These reports showed that the taxes on timber are higher than on gravel. The tax rates are determined by the State.
9. Jon reported that the money reported in the January Conservation Commissioners minutes that was deposited from funds collected for land that changed from current use can be utilized. The Commissioners will look into what needs to be done to use these funds.
10. Jon reported that he has spoken to Peter Leischman regarding the Railroad Trestle. He is still waiting to receive information regarding the price to fix the bridge. It was reported in the Planning Board minutes that the bridge has been marked for removal within the next 10 years.

As there was no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by

Karen Bartlett

Conservation Commission Recording Secretary