

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

Conservation Commission

Minutes of Meeting- April 19, 2018

Minutes Approved on-

Present: Valerie Germain, Jon Manley, Joseph MacGregor, and Thomas James

Guests: Gary MacKinnon, Scot Heath (Francestown Land Trust)

Co-Chair Valerie Germain called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

1. Minutes

- a. The minutes from the March 15, 2018 meeting were accepted as written.

2. Earth Day

- a. The Conservation Commissioners reviewed the Earth Day checklist.
- b. The VFW has been reserved for Saturday.
- c. The Boy Scouts have adopted to clean up from Pierce Hill to Rymes.
- d. Valerie reported that Mr. Verney has donated \$300. Valerie will be doing the shopping. (waffle mix, packets of sugar, milk, orange juice, fruit salad, fruit, beans, coffee). The Monadnock Paper Mill donated a quart of maple syrup. Jon Manley will be getting more maple syrup.
- e. The Girl Scouts will have poetry to share in a presentation. Bethany Craig reported through Jon Manley that they are hoping to have around 25 people attending the event.
- f. The Fire Department and the Library have been contacted and they said they will be at the Earth Day cleanup. An email has gone out to all department heads and employees inviting them to the Cleanup.
- g. The Sportsman Club and Crotched Mountain have also been contacted.
- h. Phil Germain will be making a poster highlighting the contest for the most unusual item found during the Cleanup. The prize will be a gift certificate to the Common Place.
- i. The Commissioners discussed introducing themselves at the VFW breakfast and sharing about some of the work they do as Commissioners, work done on the River Committee, and the Summer Camp scholarship.
- j. Thomas James expressed his desire for Cleanup groups to place aluminum cans in a separate bag so that they are able to be recycled. The Commissioners will announce this Saturday morning to the groups at the VFW.

3. Public Hearing-

- a. A motion was made to close the meeting to open the Public Hearing, the Conservation Commissioners meeting will reconvene after the Hearing. The motion was seconded and all were in favor. The Conservation Commissioners meeting was closed at 7 pm. The Commissioners are seeking public feedback regarding their desire to contribute \$7000 to the Francestown Land Trust. In March, there was a warrant article that was approved

by voters that allowed the Conservation Commissioners to expend money to a third party.

- b. Joe MacGregor was approached by an individual of the Town who was unable to attend the Public Hearing. This individual is in favor of placing land into conservation. Since public money is being utilized, he is hoping that the land will stay open to public use for hunting, skiing, hiking, etc. He does not have a concern about this piece of property but is concerned with if this will open up a precedence in the future to land that is accessible being open to all public use. Scot Heath addressed this concern. It is a requirement of the LCHIP that the land is open for perpetuity to public access. The Frankestown Land Trust (FLT) does have the right to identify and designate where this type of access and usage takes place. The controlling body has the right to place restrictions and make designations. This property does not currently have any snowmobile or four-wheeler trails. The FLT has been approached by area snowmobile clubs regarding the possibility of tying in trails. The FLT has made LCHIP aware that if possible a trail could run parallel to Mountain Rd if connection are conducive to the property.
 - c. Hearing no other public comments, the Conservation Commissioners were all in favor of closing the Public Hearing. The Conservation Commissioners reconvened in their meeting. The Conservation Commissioners discussed their contribution to the Frankestown Land Trust. Jon Manley made a motion to contribute \$7000 to the Frankestown Land Trust Inc. to be used to purchase the property. All were in favor of this contribution. Scot Heath expects that they will close on the property in the following two weeks and thanks the Commissioners for their support. Frankestown Land Trust looks forward to working closely with the Commissioners on the property. They ask that a representative is at the closing with authorization from the Selectmen to sign the deed. Scot Heath notified the Commissioners that in the unforeseen event that this closing does not take place, the Commissioners financial support would be returned. The Commissioners expressed their thanks to the FLT for helping to place this property into conservation.
 - d. Scot Heath and the Conservation Commissioners discussed public usage of the property. The landowner holds the right to deny rights to usage. The usage of four wheelers can cause issues to properties from misuse. Four wheelers are held accountable from the state level of enforcement. Fish and Game, if made aware of this type of limitation, will patrol and enforce.
4. NRI Public Presentation
- a. Jeff from Moosewood Ecological has contacted the Commissioners regarding the NRI Public Presentation set for May 3, 2018. Jon Manley proposed using the school for the presentation. An email will be sent to all Town Committee Chairs inviting them to the presentation. An invitation will also be sent to the Library, Recreation Department to spread the word on Facebook. The Commissioners also discussed individuals they will personally reach out to. Gary MacKinnon offered to reach out to the Crotched Mountain Ski Area. The Commissioners discussed
 - b. Kristie LaPlante contacted the Commissioners to find out if Jeff could update one of the maps to show two subdivisions that were done in 2004.
5. Other
- a. The Commissioners will contact the Selectmen regarding the Commissioners proposals for Town owned properties.

- b. The Commissioners thanked Gary MacKinnon for attending tonight and asked about his interest in joining the Commission. He expressed his desire and interest in the work that the Commissioners are doing but is hesitant due to his other commitments with work and school. Jon Manley made a motion and all were in favor of presenting Gary MacKinnon to the Selectmen as a member of the Conservation Commission. The Commissioners are very excited about the expertise he will bring to the committee.
- c. Gary MacKinnon made the Commissioners aware of the debris (mattresses) and trash that is along the Contoocook River near the island. He wondered if signage at the Route 202 pull off to leave only footprints/ carry in- carry out may bring awareness to those who use the area. Jon Manley and Joe MacGregor will also bring this concern to the River Committee. Gary also suggested working with the Recreation Department to sponsor a day of teaching the community to kayak in conjunction with cleaning up the river. The Commissioners shared with Gary about their River Float event on the lower part of the river.

As there was no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by
Karen Belcher
Conservation Commission Recording Secretary