

Town of Bennington
Conservation Commission
Minutes of the meeting- March 21, 2019

Present: Mike Munhall, Joe MacGregor, Tom James, and Jon Manley

Co-Chair Mike Munhall called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Minutes
 - a. Jon Manley made a motion to accept the minutes from the February 21, 2019 meeting. The motion was seconded by Joe MacGregor and all were in favor.
2. Membership
 - a. Mike Munhall updated the Commissioners on membership appointments. Gary MacKinnon was recently appointed. Tom James and Mike Munhall were re-appointed on March 20, 2019.
3. River Committee
 - a. Joe MacGregor updated the Commissioners of activity at the River Committee. The River Committee is interested in each town running a river activity to bring awareness of the river to the public.
 - b. Jon Manley has spoken with the Monadnock Paper Mill regarding involvement in the Town Earth Day Cleanup. They are planning a display. Jon suggested the need of plexiglass to protect displays after his observations of a display he put together for the Rhubarb Festival. Tents also needed weights.
 - c. Joe MacGregor noted that other towns review plans that may impact the River. The Commissioners will ask Kristie LaPlante to notify them of any building plans that may impact the River in order for them to review.
4. Francestown Land Trust
 - a. Mike Munhall notified the Commissioners that the Francestown Land Trust will be hosting a Joan Hanchett lecture on "Animal Sounds and What they Mean" on Friday, March 22, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at the Francestown Town Hall.
5. Old Business
 - a. North Bennington Rd
 - i. Mike Munhall updated the Commissioners of Kristie LaPlante's response in regards to the property on North Bennington Rd. She is looking in to a Brownfields assessment Program to see if they will come out and look at the property and report back. Kristie will get back to the Commissioners.
 - b. Camp Scholarship
 - i. Mike Munhall has placed an announcement in the Ledger-Transcript for a scholarship for camp. Applications are available at the Library and the Town Hall.
 - ii. Val Germain noted that she will contact Jeanette Regis in regards to promoting the camp opportunity to Bennington students at Great Brook School.

- c. Signs for invasive water plants
 - i. Two more signs for invasive water plants have arrived at the Town Hall.
- d. Boy Scouts
 - i. Joe MacGregor has spoken to the Boy Scouts regarding projects involving the Edes Forest. It was suggested that the Commissioners attend a meeting to make a presentation to the Boy Scouts. Joe and Mike will attend.
- e. New Business
 - i. Town Election Conservation Commission Warrant Articles
 - 1. Both warrant articles regarding gravel and timber taxes transferred to the Conservation Fund passed at the March election. The Conservation Fund account is currently \$52,177.60.
 - 2. Next year the Conservation Commissioners warrant articles will be for 75%. The year after will be 100%.
 - ii. Budget
 - 1. The Commissioners reviewed the budget. At this time there is 82% of the budget remaining.
 - 2. Options for fund monies
 - a. Certificate of Deposit
 - i. Currently a 13 month CD at People's to Bar Harbor is earning 1.75% interest.
 - ii. The local representative for the NH Public Deposit Investment Pool's current rate is 2.41%.
 - iii. Tom James made a motion to place \$50,000 in the investment pool with NH Public Deposit as long as the interest rate is accurate. Jon Manley seconded the motion and all were in favor.
 - 3. Earth Day Plans
 - a. The use of the VFW has been scheduled for the Town-wide Earth Day event on May 4, 2019.
 - b. Leslie MacGregor from the Bennington Dodge Library has agreed to put together a book walk.
 - c. The Commissioners will verify if the State is still involved in picking up trash bags on the highway.
 - d. Mike Munhall will take care of promotional signage and publicity.
 - e. Val Germain will take care of the notices to go home with students and the shopping.
 - f. Jon Manley will make beans and bring the coffee.
 - g. Set-up and Clean-up will involve everyone.
 - h. Joe MacGregor will contact Chris Davy from the Highway for picking up the trash bags. Joe will also contact Jeff from the Common Place.

- i. Tom James will provide the eggs for Val Germain's egg casserole and Joe' MacGregor's waffle batter.
 - j. The Commissioners discussed purchasing vests to offer to volunteers.
 - k. The Commissioners also discussed purchasing t-shirts for the Conservation Commissioners as it is their 30th anniversary. It was discussed selling the t-shirts to the public.
 - l. Joe MacGregor wondered if breakfast was advertised from 9am to 10am if that would open the possibility for the Conservation Commissioners being able to make a presentation. The Commissioners discussed creating a pamphlet or a video to educate and inform the public.
4. Property
 - a. The Commissioners discussed possible properties for purchasing. The Commissioners will reach out to property owners.
5. Val Germain updated the Commissioners that she has spoken with the GBS art teacher, Victoria Burnham in regards to having students create art that can be used to beautify the display box located at the Edes Forest. Victoria was interested and has asked that the Commissioners discuss possible ideas. The Commissioners discussed animals and plants seen in the Forest. The Commissioners will provide a list of the species that can be found in the Forest. Mike Munhall made a motion to formally ask Victoria Burnham to have students create pictures/art for the Edes Forest display. Tom James seconded the motion and all were in favor. Joe MacGregor has a scavenger hunt that was created by Leslie MacGregor. The Commissioners discussed moving the display box to an area that will be better seen and/or building a kiosk.
6. Tom James notified the Commissioners that the gate on the Railroad has been locked.
7. Joe MacGregor is currently putting together pictures that can be viewed in a slideshow of work and walks that the Commissioners have done.
8. Goals for the Conservation Commission
 - a. Land Acquisition
 - b. Outreach
 - c. Utilization of the NRI- approach the Planning Board, formally submit it to the Selectmen

Val Germain made a motion to adjourn. Mike Munhall seconded the motion. As there was no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by

Karen Belcher
Conservation Commissioner Recording Secretary