



## BENNINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

**November 18, 2021, 6:30 PM**

**Depot**

### **Minutes**

**Meeting** Called to order at 6:30PM by Mike Munhall

**PRESENT:** Zach Allen, Tom James, Pat Long, Joe MacGregor, Jon Manley, Mike Munhall, Steve Willette

**MINUTES** of October 21, 2021 approved with the addition of Upgrade the Bennington Trail as a goal for 2022.

#### **MAIL -**

- NHACC sent a form for members to update their contact information. It was circulated during the meeting.
- The Town Administrator sent four Intents-to-Cut approved by the selectmen for the Commission to review:
  - Gillis Hill Road Map 19 Lots 21 a, b, c
  - Route 202 Map 16 Lot 2
  - Pierce Hill Road Map 8 Lot 17
  - Old Stagecoach Road Map 10 Lots 47 and 47a

#### **REPORTS**

**River Committee** - The River Committee is in the process of creating/updating the management plan for the entire Contoocook River. When it is complete the Committee will give it to each town along the river to include in its Master Plan.

The River Committee is gathering a list of all the properties along the Contoocook to create guidelines for the protection of the river.

Antrim is working on better management of Gregg Lake. The beavers have begun to nest in water flow areas and the result is blocking the movement of other animals to nesting areas and the creation of algae plumes in the Lake.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

**Resolution on Old Stage Property from August:** Follow up to our resolution to clarify the title of Old Stagecoach Road property between the cemeteries: (from October 26, 2021 Board of Selectmen minutes) "The Conservation Commission asked that the Selectmen accept this resolution and designate the property on

Old Stagecoach Road between the two cemeteries as a “townForest” after a clear title is obtained. The Commission would like to make the property on Old Stagecoach Road accessible to the resident, but it is unclear to the Commission if the town owns the parcel. To correct this, the Commission passed this resolution: MOTION by Jon Manley, seconded by Joe MacGregor “The Conservation Commission requests the Board of Selectmen designate the property on Old Stagecoach Road between the two cemeteries as a ‘Town Forest’ after the Board has obtained clear title to the parcel.”

- “Selectmen discussed this request, the property can be walked anytime, it is a Town Parcel. Discussion followed that the land is for cemetery expansion and will remain as such, it is not to be considered “Town Forest,” the Town Forest is the Bruce Edes Forest.”
- In the Commission discussion that followed, it was stated the two previous Town Administrators told members of the Commission that it was “unclear” who owned the property and that there was no record of the property being given to the town.

### **Master Plan updates**

Water Quality - Zach said that he had taken the first water sample

Work with Planning on Commercial/Industrial areas - Mike

Land Use Change Tax - Joe

Rail Trail - Steve and Jon

**Alternate water sites** - Jon has spoken with Dennis McKinney, chair of the Water Commission about secondary aquifers. The secondary one comes down along Route 47 and crosses over Route 31 just south of the village. A tertiary aquifer begins up near Switzer Road and flows down to the river. They need to be tested for water quality. Once the aquifers are identified and tested the Planning Board will be informed.

### **GOALS FOR 2022 - Finalize**

- Continuing to work to get the Board of Selectmen to commit to getting the depot restored and functional.
- Continue to work on finding uses for the Old Stagecoach and Durgin Road properties.
- Upgrade the Bennington Trail.
- Pursue grants to fund our projects.
- Tally town and current use properties to see what can be done to make them accessible to the public.
- Maintain what we currently have: Annual clean up roads and forest
- Do more educational outreach (specifics)
- Perambulate the Greenfield townline.
- Work to get the trestle opened and explore a bike trail.

Jon Manley moved and Steve Willette seconded to accept these serve as the Commission's goals for 2022. Unanimously accepted.

**2022 Budget -**

In the discussion of the budget it was mentioned that since the applications for the Harris Center Camp have been minimal, the Commission should look for alternative ways to reach out to students in Bennington for meaningful experiences. Squam Lake and VINS were both mentioned.

It was moved by Jon Manley and seconded by Zach Allen that the 2022 budget would be the same total (\$2064) as the 2021 budget but that the funds would be reallocated. It was unanimously approved.

<b>Account</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2021 Actual</b>
<b>Labor/Secretary</b>	<b>200</b>	400	25
<b>FICA</b>	<b>14</b>	31	2
<b>Dues/Subscript</b>	<b>500</b>	450	500
<b>Office Supplies</b>	<b>150</b>	50	120
<b>Educ/Outreach</b>	<b>800</b>	500	685
<b>General/Misc</b>	<b>400</b>	633	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>2064</b>	2064	1390

**NEW BUSINESS**

**2022 Calendar** The current 2021 calendar was distributed for members to look it over for the December meeting.

**DEPOT:** Removal of piano the selectmen have asked the Commission to get rid of the piano. We will advertise it on Facebook and Craigslist for free. The Selectmen have committed to replacing the Spirea bush by the rock with a new one in the Spring.

**Annual Forest Maintenance REVIEW** - We had a great turnout, however, it was probably too early. Without a freeze there was an abundance of leaves still on the trees on October 24 and should probably be scheduled for mid November.

**Deering Townline Perambulation REVIEW** - Jon Manley, Joe MacGregor and Mike Munhall did much of the townline but it still needs to be completed. A discussion followed about updating the guidance system to be used for the

perambulation. GAIA and Garmin both make systems and in the next few weeks members will determine which is the best way to go.

**Map of Storage Unit complex** - Joe MacGregor brought and updated plan for the storage unit complex planned for Route 202 behind Dollar General. Joe talked about how the water will be moved around the property via culverts to two retention ponds. The plan will be presented to the Town Planning Board on December 13.

**Haunted Forest** - Tom James proposed a Halloween Forest for 2022. The discussion that followed talked about making it family friendly and to take the impressions of very young children into account and not try to unduly scare them. Possibly have guided tours to show how exciting the forest can be at night. In general, all were in favor of further discussions and making plans for next October.

**Warrant Articles for Timber and Gravel Tax and Land Use Change** - Following previous years, the Commission will request that the Selectmen follow a previous promise to increase the Commission's portion of Timber and Gravel Tax to 100%. In that regard the Commission will request that this year's Warrant Article will ask for 75% funding.

**Substitute Chair for Jan, Feb and March** - Jon Manley will be chair pro tem while Mike Munhall is away this winter. Meetings will be held at Town Hall and the option for Zoom connections will be possible.

**FRANCESTOWN Conservation Commission** has invited Bennington residents to their talk on Otters talk Friday, November 19 6:30PM Town Hall

**Caroling** - Jon Manley announced that the Bennington Recreation Committee and Bennington Democrats will reinstitute the holiday caroling party on December 10 at 6PM

**NEXT MEETING: December 16**

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:20**

Recorded by Mike Munhall