



Bennington Conservation Commission

May 18, 2023 6:30PM

Minutes - Approved

Call to order: at 6:30 PM by Joe MacGregor, substitute chair

**Attendance - Present:* Zach Allen, Joe MacGregor, Jon Manley, Tom James, Steve Willette.

**Absent:* Mike Munhall, Christina Hahn, Pat Long

Minutes: April 20, 2023 VOTE Minutes didn't get distributed in time to be reviewed they will be considered at the June meeting along with the May minutes

Mail: None

Reports

River Committee - None

Town Hall - Tom James

Answers to questions -

- Do Antrim and Frankestown pay gravel tax when they removed gravel from Bennington pit? These two towns pay a tax of \$.02/cubic yard for gravel.
- What is the end time for the Bennington pit?
- Reaction of Select Board to Class 6 roads issues of use and maintenance. No permits will be issued unless there is an upgrade to the Class 6 road that is approved by the police, fire and highway departments.

Old Business

- VOTE on Bar Harbor Bank funds - moving the funds to an interest bearing account.
 - Not ready for a vote, the commissioners would like to speak with a rep from the bank.
 - Conservation Fund - We have a new deposit of about \$21,000 making our balance about \$105,000. Bar Harbor Bank has our conservation fund monies currently in an account that gains minimal interest. Do we want to switch to long or short term CDs or an interest bearing account?
 - 5 Month 2.75% APY
 - 7 Month 3.25% APY
 - 13 Month 3.75% APY

- Town Map Colors for types of land - Printed and ready to be colored according to use of each lot. A VOTE decided that we will put this off until winter.
- Earth Day Cleanup REVIEW
 - Successful but a better date needs to be found that doesn't conflict with school vacation, the fishing derby and other town activities.
- Bennington Trail parking - Mike spoke with Rick Edmunds and he is available to help with the creation of a parking area when the BCC is ready to proceed. Zach is determining the exact location for the parking.
- Recreational Trails Program - Zach Allen reported that there are grants each year and the applications are due June 16. It is too late for this year but the notification for 2024 will be in August. Zach will begin the paperwork. He feels that Bennington is a good candidate.
- Antrim Road Triangle - Tom indicates that the Town Road Crew will do the major work on the upgrade, leaving the large rhododendron and removing the large tree.
- Rockford Property on North Bennington Road - BCC asked the select board to hold off on the acceptance of any bid. On advice of town counsel the sale will include the necessity of cleaning up the property.
- Speakers - Joe has lined up Dale Russell for a talk on area railroads on July 15 at the Depot. It was VOTED that the BCC would pay \$150 for Susie Spikol to speak June 27th at the Depot.
- Midsummer Eve, Friday, June 23 (day before the Contoocook Cruise) - The BCC will sell, for donations, grilled and steamed hot dogs. Tom, Jon and Joe will staff the cookers.
- Pierce School/Harris Center 2022 donation - The \$300 donation from the summer of 2022 will fund a talk at Pierce School by Susie Spikol in the fall of 2023.

New Business

- Jesse Cruz, Recreation Chair stopped in to say that the Rec Committee would like to support the River Paddle and our efforts to improve the Depot.

- Rhubarb Festival Display...Jon Manley will display the NRI and brochures in a tent with the River Committee.
- 2024 Earth Day Sign Competition - VOTED to keep the Earth Day Sign Competition. It's good for PR
- Next year's Conservation warrant. Jim Cleary has said that there will be a warrant on next March's ballot that will ask that the gravel and timber taxes will go to the Conservation Commission 100%. (currently 75%)
- BCC was contacted about extensive cutting on North Bennington Road near the old steel bridge. Select Board Chair Jim Cleary checked on it and found that it was storm clean up.
- BCC was contacted about the soil and rock removal on South Bennington Road along the river and has reported it to DES after the town building inspector said it was a violation.
- 202 property by Dollar General has a culvert permit from DES
- BCC Brochure - Suggestions: better picture of Depot, Zach has some suggestions and will report for next meeting.

GOALS FOR 2023

- Continuing work to get the Board of Selectmen to commit to getting the depot restored and functional.
- Finish the website and launch it. Include maps, minutes, trail maps, resources...
- Hold public educational events with speakers addressing environmental topics.
- Continued stewardship of the Forest with maintenance of trails and bridges and new signage.
- Continue to provide leadership in making the town cleaner and more environmentally proactive.
- Perambulate Greenfield town line and finish Deering town line.
- Encourage the town to use environmental "best practices" for the operation of town buildings and activities. ie: net metering, energy audit of town buildings.

Adjourned 8:00 PM

Recorded by Joe MacGregor, edited by Mike Munhall