



Bennington Conservation Commission
June 16, 2022 6:30 PM at the Depot

Minutes

Meeting called to order 6:35

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

Minutes of May 2022 Approved

Mail - none

Reports/Announcements

- Items from NHACC newsletter
 - **Land Conservation Seminar**
Saturday, June 25 from 10 am to 12 pm
Fox Forest-Baldwin Environmental Center, Hillsborough
- Mike Munhall and Jon Manley will get a wedding wreath spirea to replace the Bruce Edes memorial in front of the depot. Pat Long will do some research to find the best selection.
- Concern was raised about the spraying of the edge of the depot parking area with a toxic fluid so close to the river. Was permission obtained from the appropriate body? Was the person spraying certified?

Old business

- Old Kiosk, what to do with it? It was suggested that it could be used at the trailhead of the Bennington Trail. That idea didn't get full support as it might be too big. It was also suggested that it could be used at the Transfer Station. No decision was made.
- Review of Rhubarb Festival - Jon Manley said that the whole festival was a success and the River Committee/BCC tent got a lot of attention. Many maps and pamphlets were handed out and lots of people enquired about the River Paddle. It was suggested by Jon that the BCC create a pamphlet about itself to distribute.

- Master Plan updates -
 - Water Quality - Zach Allen has been doing sample collections and sending them in.
 - Rail Trail - trees are growing in the rail bed in the Forest which didn't happen previously because of spraying which killed off forest critters.

- Monarch Waystations - Pollinator Grants - details from NHACC June newsletter. The information was shared with Colleen Allen and Pierce School to see interest. There was a discussion that we could do a pollinator garden on the town property on North Bennington Road across from Durgin Road. Joe will contact Town Hall to clarify the use of the property and attend the next Select Board meeting to explain the idea and get permission to use the land.

- Little Library - Joe MacGregor has all the materials and is ready to complete the job. He would like to fill the library with field guides and nature books as a resource for people visiting the Forest.

- Edes Suggestions
 - New bench above larger erratic - Steve Willette will price the cost of building benches.
 - Derocking path from river bench to rail bed. Joe MacGregor and Mike Munhall will check the feasibility of the removal of stones with picks and shovels as a first alternative to making the path less precarious.

New Business

- Bennington Trail maintenance project - Zach Allen presented a three phase program to improve the Bennington Trail off of Mountain Road.
 - Phase 1 - Reblaze entire trail and reroute upper portion from Trail to Ski Area junction up to summit. Time/Cost: \$50 paint and brushes, ½ day with 3 people.
 - Phase 2 Further maintenance from parking lot up to spring. Includes:
 - Reposition rocks at 3 mud/water crossings.
 - Adding waterbars (2) above the seasonal stream.
 - Removing fallen oak along the stonewall and other fallen trees.
 - Touch up stone work around spring piping and rerouting/bridging of trails in the area. Time/Cost: 1 day with 6 people, 2 days with 3. \$175-400 if boardwalk or bridges are needed. Otherwise use natural materials (stones)

- Phase 3 Switch back rerouting on steeper pitch near spring to where trail eases from pitch. Time/cost: 2 days with 6 individuals. 3-4 with 3. No cost based on tools available, leftover blazing equipment.
 - Other Service Project Needs - New trail sign at base? Or just a sign for Bennington Trail. Junction sign near Shannon Trail. Junction sign at head path leading to ski area. Trailhead kiosk?

 - Pat Long volunteered to help.
 - There was a discussion that the used kiosk from the depot would be too large for the parking area at the trailhead and since it isn't town property it would be inappropriate.
- River Scouting trip June 18 - Steve Willette, Joe MacGregor and Aaron Willette will meet Saturday at 8AM to scout the river and check on the navigableness of the river to the Paddle. They will determine if the Paddle will continue on the river north of the Mill or if it should be moved to the alternative location of the Covered Bridge on Forest Road to the pull out landing.
 - River Paddle June 25 9am - Plans are set for the day. The ladder will be installed on Friday at the pullout. Snacks are set. There is a lot of talk, so we could have another record turnout. First Aid kit and blue bags will be brought. An evacuation plan will be focused on cell phone GPS for emergency staff to get to the group.

Zach Allen moved for adjournment, Steve Willette seconded, unanimous 8:12PM

Next Meeting - AUGUST 18, 2022

Minutes by Mike Munhall