



Bennington Conservation Commission
October 19, 2023 6:30PM at the Depot
ANNUAL MEETING

Minutes

Call to order: 6:30

Attendance - Present: Zach Allen, Jane Butler, Joe MacGregor, Jon Manley, Mike Munhall,
Absent: Tom James, Pat Long, Steve Willette

Minutes: Minutes from September were approved as written.

Finances: See Old Business

Mail: attached

Email from NHACC is holding two workshops on Conservation Bonds and PFAS in the next month.

Reports

- NHACC - Annual Meeting November 4 at Pembroke Academy -
 - Zach, Jon, Joe and Mike Registered
 - Joe graciously offered to drive. We will leave at 7:30AM
 - Meetings begin at 8:45AM and ends 2:30PM

- River Committee - The River Committee was asked to participate in the Hillsborough History Alive in 2024. Jon will display the Contoocook Valley map and other information.

- Town Hall - Tom James absent, no report

Old Business

- Antrim Road/Bible Hill Triangle - The road crew has cleaned out much of the vines and brush. It was discussed as to what should be the next steps. It was agreed that it should be kept simple with mostly grass and a strip of a low maintenance garden across the back. But that the plantings should never grow high enough to be a detriment to drivers' vision. Perennial plantings suggested in seasonal sequence were: daffodils, lupine, daylilies. There is curbing available at the town garage. The grass could be cut by the road crew when they do the Historical Society and parking lawns. Unanimous approval of the plan.
 - There was a question about the soil deposited at the depot recently...is it from the triangle? What's the purpose? Is it for the depot lawn?

- Conservation Fund: Mike had received an email from Rhonda Davie, town treasurer updating the CD rates from Bar Harbor Bank. The options are: 5 month APY 2.75%, 9 month APY 4.50%, and 13 month APY 4.00%. With a penalty of a loss of 3 months of interest if pulled out before maturity. The cash we would have in the bank will be getting 3%. There was a motion to use the 9 month CD for 75% (\$77,250) of the conservation funds with 25% (\$24,750) remaining in savings. It passed unanimously.
- Bennington Trail Workday - Zach reported that a lot got done. Joe, Jane, Zach and his two sons worked. Got the revised trail “penciled out”, made water paths to minimize trail wetness and erosion. Plan on making the enlarged parking area happen. (Rick Edmunds will help with equipment if needed)

New Business

- Membership - Joe MacGregor and Jon Manley were both unanimously reappointed for terms ending in 2026. Both men have been on the Commission for over 30 years.
- 2024 Budget - unanimously approved for submission.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION			
Category			
Year	Budget 2023	Requested 2024	Notes
Labor	400	400	
FICA	31	31	
Dues	500	342	
Supplies	50	50	
Education	500	1000	More programming
Misc	633	633	
TOTAL	2114	2456	+342

- Whittemore Lake pollution - discussion was held about the recent closing of the lake due to cyanobacteria. It will be one of the commission’s goals for 2024 to address the responsible use of the lake and surrounding properties.
- Nextrex - A discussion was held about the benefits of promoting this program to recycle plastic film such as plastic bags and wrappers. Look into getting a barrel for the recycling at the Transfer Station. And encourage residents to use the service.
 - a. <https://nextrex.com/>
- Review of GOALS 2023

- Continuing work to get the Board of Selectmen to commit to getting the depot restored and functional. *History marker for Factory Village was moved to the depot parking lot, early photos of the depot and trains in Bennington were hung in the depot, and the handicap parking area has been painted.*
 - Finish the website and launch it. Include maps, minutes, trail maps, resources... *no progress*
 - Hold public educational events with speakers addressing environmental topics. *Talks by Dale Russell on the history of trains in the Contoocook Valley, Susie Spikol on being an animal adventurer. Held the sign competition for local students to promote good environmental stewardship.*
 - Continued stewardship of the Forest with maintenance of trails and bridges and new signage. *On going - two work days were held for the Forest and two for the Bennington Trail.*
 - Continue to provide leadership in making the town cleaner and more environmentally proactive. *On going*
 - Perambulate Greenfield town line and finish Deering town line. *Postponed to 2024*
 - Encourage the town to use environmental “best practices” for the operation of town buildings and activities. ie: net metering, energy audit of town buildings. *Need to make a plan to present to the Select Board.*
- NEW GOALS FOR 2024 - approval voted unanimously
 1. Establish a property conservation easement educational program to help residents decide to put their land into conservation or common use. Look into providing financial assistance to those wishing to do either.
 2. Make a greater effort to get a website operational.
 3. Perambulate Greenfield townline and complete the Deering townline.
 4. Monitor water quality in town waters and look into remediation of current issues.
 5. Continue work on the Bennington Trail and build a parking area at the trailhead.
 6. Do more educational programming on environmental issues and history.

Upcoming Calendar Items to Note

- Forest Cleanup Day....In 2022 it was the first Saturday of December...3rd

Remarks for the Good of the Order

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Next Meeting November 17

Adjourned: 7:55PM

Minutes by Mike Munhall

