



Bennington Conservation Commission
November 16, 2023 6:30 PM at the Depot

Minutes

Call to order: 6:30PM

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

Minutes: Minutes from October 19 were approved on a motion from Joe and seconded by Zach

Reports

- NHACC - Annual Meeting November 4 at Pembroke Academy - attended by Zach, Joe and Mike. Each gave a brief review of the sessions they attended and information gathered. Topics included: NRI use, Trail management, Wetlands, Conservation Fundamentals, the Mahoosucs, and climate change's effects on roads. We will ask the town librarian to subscribe to Northern Woodlands magazine.
- River Committee - Joe and Jon - They met with Antrim CC to discuss the placement of a plaque for Rod Zwerner. Antrim is building a new well on Bennington land at the end of Balch Farm Extension. Pipes going under the river will probably be necessary. There is no evidence of permits at this point.
- Town Hall - Tom - The Veterans of Foreign Wars has proposed remodeling the depot. A couple of plans have already been submitted preliminarily. The VFW apparently has become more active and larger. Due to its work in fixing up the depot, The Conservation Commission has requested being consulted on the plans for any renovation. Tom will ask Jim Creighton to contact Mike.

Old Business

- Conservation Fund: Rhonda Davie has been notified of the BCC decision and is purchasing the 9 month CD and investing 75% of the Conservation Fund.
- 2024 Budget - no reply yet from town hall.
- Whittemore Lake pollution - Doreen Cawley joined the meeting to discuss the ongoing situation with cyanobacteria bloom in Lake Whittemore. This is the first time there has been a bloom in the 40 years that the Cawley's have lived on the lake. DES tested in late August

and red flagged the lake. There have been regular tests since August. As of today the numbers are still very high. There was a discussion of the possible sources for the bloom including: runoff from the otherside of Route 31, septic leaks around the lake, and summer campers. Tom James indicated that a health assessment of the lake has been requested by the Selectmen. There was a discussion of creating a lake association or/and a Lake Advisory Committee under the River Committee.

New Business

- Forest Cleanup Day will be Saturday, December 2 at 9:00 AM at the Depot. Rakes, leaf blowers, and saws are probably tools needed.
- Zach - Discussed the plans for Property at map 3 lot 15 on Mountain Road to be a parking area for the Bennington Trail. Next step is going to a Selectmen's meeting for their approval.
- Civil War Talk - Eric Tenney and Dave Beck have offered to do a talk about the Civil War. The weekends of January 20-21 and 27-28 were chosen as possible dates. Joe will discuss with Eric and Dave their ability to work with those dates and also speak with the Bennington Historical Society to have a joint program and use the Society building for comfort and the many displays that may be relevant to the talk.
- Joe mentioned that Robert Goodbee would like to check the Contoocook River on the west side of the river to see if there is more evidence of artifacts of native Americans in that area.
- NEW GOALS FOR 2024 - adopted October 19, 2023
 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 -

Meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM Next Meeting December 21

Recorded by Mike Munhall