



Bennington Conservation Commission
November 17, 2022 6:30 PM at the Depot
Meeting was postponed from October 20, 2022

Annual Meeting Minutes

Call to order: 6:33 PM

Present: Zach Allen, Joe MacGregor, Jon Manley, Mike Munhall, Steve Willette

Absent: Pat Long, Christina Hahn, Tom James

Minutes: Approved Unanimously

Mail: NHDES Wetland Application for Tax Map 16 Lot 2 Revised Dredge and Fill Permit. Joe updated the group on the latest developments that DES is requiring additional information from the planners and developer.

Membership: Steve Willette and Mike Munhall were unanimously reappointed for terms ending in October 2025. Mike Munhall was unanimously voted for a one year term as chair.

Reports

- **River Committee** Does the River Committee have or know of speakers on environmental topics we could hire for town talks?
- Items from NHACC newsletter -
 - **NHACC Annual Meeting**, November 5 at Pembroke Academy- **Pat Long**
Report postponed until next meeting.
- **Communication from town hall** (Tom James): none

Old Business

- **Rockwell Pollinator Garden - Pat Long** progress on scouting and planning Pat's absence postpones this to a future meeting.
- **Antrim/Bible Hill Pollinator Garden** - Clean up is going to be rescheduled from November 9 to some time in the spring.

- **Town Engagement -**
 - Community Suppers. We have chosen to do a community supper with the Dodge Library on February 9. We will do a Valentine's Day theme. It was suggested that we do a sausage dinner with a variety of links including meats and vegetarian options.
 - We will approach the ConVal music dept about entertainment.

- **Master Plan -** We use the December meeting as a work session to map out all the current use properties. The meeting will begin at 5:30 and have a truncated business meeting. Mike will get town property maps from town hall.

- **Bennington Trail** Zach Allen updated the group on the work he and Joe MacGregor did to take down the old trail markers and blaze the trail with clear marks. Thanks to both these commissioners for their work.

- **Forest benches -** Steve hopes to have the bench done for the December 3 forest clean up.

- **The Forest Clean Up Day** will be December 3 @9:00 AM. We will clear the trails and do work on the new path to avoid rocks. All this depends on the weather that day.

New Business

- BUDGET

Conservation Commission 9/23/22	Budget	Actual	Balance
01 4611 1 119 CC Labor/Secretary	400.00	0.00	400.00
01 4611 1 220 CC Fica/Medicare	31.00	0.00	31.00
01 4611 1 310 CC Dues/Subscrip	500.00	0.00	500.00
01 4611 1 601 CC Office Supplies	50.00	8.78	41.22
01 4619 1 320 CC Education	500.00	300.00	200.00
01 4619 1 800 CC General	633.00	406.75	226.25
Total - Conservation Commission	2,114.00	715.53	1,398.47

Conservation Fund at Bar Harbor Bank as of August 2022 \$72,919.79

- It was unanimously voted to request \$2,114.00 again for 2023

- It was agreed that the Commission should contribute funds to the Library to offset all the printing we do there.
- It was suggested that the Commission purchase equipment for the pollinator gardens and depot landscaping as well as seeds for spring

Review of GOALS FOR 2022

- Continuing to work to get the Board of Selectmen to commit to getting the depot restored and functional. *Partially done - painting*
- Continue to work on finding uses for the Old Stagecoach and Durgin Road properties. - *The Old Stagecoach property can be used for hiking but remain available for a future cemetery. The Durgin Road property is going to be developed into a pollinator garden.*
- Pursue grants to fund our projects. -*Ongoing with limited new efforts*
- Tally town and current use properties to see what can be done to make them accessible to the public. -*December's meeting will address this.*
- Maintain what we currently have: *Annual clean up roads and forest, blazed Bennington Trail, did regular water testing.*
- Do more educational outreach (specifics) - *underwrote more work with Harris Center and Pierce. Held Annual River Paddle*
- Perambulate the *Greenfield* townline. *Not done.*
- Work to get the trestle opened and explore a bike trail. - *Had a first meeting with various involved parties.*

GOALS FOR 2023

- Continuing to 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* townline and finish *Deering* townline.
- Encourage the town to use environmental “best practices” for the operation of town buildings and activities. ie: net metering, energy audit of town buildings

What do Conservation Commission's do?

NH's Conservation commissions have the responsibility to ensure the protection and sustainable use of NH's natural resources through a variety of tools and techniques.

These engaged volunteers study natural resources and develop long-term plans and strategies for the protection of critical habitats, water resources, and natural areas. They purchase land and conservation easements to protect wildlife habitat and natural resources to ensure these natural areas will be available for generations to come. They provide educational programs to the public and lead hikes and outdoor activities. They manage town land for timber production, recreation, and wildlife. They work closely with the State's Department of Environmental Services to provide local comments on wetland permits.

Conservation commissions are on the forefront of emerging issues. Increasing contaminants threaten our drinking water and lakes and streams. Climate change impacts our native species and threatens biodiversity. Development impacts are putting pressure on wildlife and other natural resources. Commissions help ensure climate resilience by assisting with hazard mitigation plans, to address flooding and drought. They support wildlife habitat by restoring wetlands, rivers and streams to provide connectivity for migration and breeding grounds.

Membership

(all three year terms are up for reappointment in October of the year)

Steve Willette 2025

Mike Munhall 2025

Joe MacGregor 2023

Jon Manley 2023

Zach Allen 2024

Pat Long 2024

Christina Hahn 2025

Tom James *Ex officio*