



Bennington Conservation Commission

Caring for the Land and Cultivating Community since 1989

February 15, 2024 6:30 PM at the Depot

Minutes

Call to order: 6:30PM by Mike Munhall

Attendance: Zach Allen, Jane Butler, Jon Manley, Tom James, Joe MacGregor, Steve Willette, Mike Munhall

Visitors: Tony Parisi, Sherry Miller, Matt Miller, Harley Miller, Deb Davidson, Zack Anderson

Minutes: From January meeting approved as written. Jon moved, Joe seconded -Unanimously pass

Reports

- River Committee - Joe and Jon - meeting next week
- Town Hall Update - Tom - refer to North Bennington Road situation below.
- Finances - Budget for the year, though not approved until March vote is \$2456

Old Business

- BCC Sign - Mike had a new BCC banner made for the Community Supper and future events for \$38.
- Civil War Talk Review
 - Strengths - 35 people attended, lots of detail. Great location - Historical Society
 - Weaknesses - somewhat off topic of local people involved in the war. A bit long, Eric Tenney didn't get a chance to talk.
- Sausage Fest Review
 - \$422 total Donations \$238 Net \$ 184
 - Strengths - @125 people, appropriate amounts of food, many wanted some of each food item, good music, people socialized,
 - Weaknesses

- North Bennington Road complaint update - There was extensive discussion. Opened with Tony Parisi saying that the Select Board had rescinded the DES letter and apologized to the Millers. And that the Board is formulating policies to deal with complaints.
 - The report from the BCC to the Select Board in the form of a letter was given to the Select Board at its January 29th meeting then approved unanimously (3-0) by the Board. At the next Select Board meeting it was rescinded after listening to the complaints of Harley Miller and his parents. The Millers had several questions at our meeting: Why were they treated differently than the sawdust situation? Why weren't the Miller's approached before sending the letter to DES? Why doesn't the BCC have policies for handling complaints? What properties did the Commissioners visit to see the brook? Where did they view the brook above the washout? Why wasn't the building inspector asked to visit? Why wasn't the "resident" named in the minutes? Who was the "resident"? There was no denial about the fact that there was sand in the brook that came from the parking lot.
 - The Millers were treated the same as previous complaints: the BCC investigated the complaint and discussed it at the BCC meeting then referred it to the Town Administrator and Select Board. The sawdust situation wasn't a formal complaint but something that the BCC noticed and it hasn't completed its investigation. The BCC needs to develop "written" policies for dealing with situations they deal with. When the chair said that complaints to the BCC are anonymous, Mr Parisi stated that the selectmen do not accept anonymous complaints. The resident was Scott Liljeberg. Building inspector idea was vetoed by the Select Board.
 - The Commission needs to find relevant RSAs and policies for various situations.

- Land Conservation Talk: UPDATE - Jane.
 - Tuesday, March 19 at 7:00 PM Town Hall and Zoom
 - Eric Masterson from the Harris Center is all set.
 - Zooming the program is looking unlikely.
 - Antrim, Hancock, Greenfield, and Frankestown CCs being invited. An article will be in the Ledger inviting anyone to come.

- Sawdust expansion - This was tabled on a motion by Steve and seconded by Joe. Unanimous vote

New Business

- The Select Board referred a letter of complaint received from Harley Miller regarding tax map 17, lot 34 and tax map 18, lots 3-2 and 2. Before leaving the meeting Mr. Miller stated that he has seen the damage caused by the culvert first hand and that one is on the right-of-way across his property.
The matter will be looked into once the Commission has a written policy for handling complaints.

- Professor Goodbee of Franklin Pierce University update? No response to calls.
- Earth Day Sign Competition Theme ***“Be Kind to Pollinators”***
 - Open to all Bennington students K-12. Students may work in teams.
 - All work needs to be done by the student/s.
 - Design and wording should relate to the theme.
 - Design must be done by hand, computer generated designs are not accepted
 - Design should be submitted on a 8.5” x 11” sheet of paper.
 - The student/s name and grade should be written on the back of the design.
 - Turn in the design to the Dodge Library or Mrs. Germain at Pierce School
 - The design needs to be submitted the Friday before the March BCC meeting.
- Perambulation of Greenfield Townline...Tentatively scheduled for March 23
 - Landowners whose property will be crossed need to be notified and give permission.

Upcoming Calendar Items to Note -

- *March 19 Land Conservation Presentation*

Meeting was adjourned 8:00PM Steve motioned, Jon seconded, unanimous

Next Meeting March 21 @6:30 @ depot

Recorded by Mike Munhall

- 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.