



**Bennington Conservation Commission**

*Caring for the Land and Cultivating Community since 1989*

**April 18, 2024 6:30 PM at the Depot**

*Minutes*

***Call to order: 6:30PM***

***Attendance:*** Steve Willette, Jon Manley, Jane Butler, Joe MacGregor, Tom James, Mike Munhall.

Visitor: Tim Brig

***Minutes:*** From March approved as submitted.

***Correspondence:*** Town forwarded intents to cut: Map 3 Lot 26; Map 19 Lot 1; Map 19 Lot 21A, A2, B and C; Map 5 Lot 3; Map 17 Lot 25; Map 5 Lot 4; Map 14 Lot 2 Map 11 Lots 13 and 14. And intents to excavate: Map 11 Lot 12; Map 11 Lot 16; Map 3 Lot 1.

***Reports***

- Pierce School 3rd grade -Followup -Joe - as a followup to the Pierce 3rd grade's salamander project, Joe MacGregor went with the class to the Edes Forest when they set up their research site.
- River Committee - Joe and Jon - mentioned that the Antrim well site on Balch Farm Road is progressing.
- Town Hall Update - Tom - submitted an intent to cut Map 5/4
- Finances - Town system is down so balances aren't available - the monies from 2023 timber and gravel tax has been submitted to the BCC.

***Old Business***

- Sawdust expansion -Followup after DES clarification? As long as the sawdust is mitigating invasives, it's permitted.
- North Bennington Road complaint followup - we were copied a letter from NHDES with instructions for the land owner to be completed by June 7 2024. Since NHDES is now taking action, the Commission will remove itself from any further involvement on this issue.
- Plans for Earth Day, April 20 — Checklist Last minute review

- A story walk has been set up.
- Check on invitation for selectmen
- Check on tables being moved
- Earth Day Sign Competition - sign is printed and ready for Earth Day. Mike is presenting it to the winner at Pierce School on Friday
- Perambulation of Greenfield Townline...rescheduled to June 8
  - Joe showed maps and recommended that we learn to use the NH GRANIT mapping app.
- Plans for Antrim/Bible hill triangle - Update - Matt Blanchard and DJ did a great job clearing the area of vines and the big stump. We are still in discussion about granite curbing.
- Bylaw rough draft review - Joe moved that we table the discussion of bylaws until the next meeting. Second Jon, unanimous.

### ***New Business***

- Planet Aid request. This was discussed and it was the conclusion of the group that the town should have nothing to do with Planet Aid.
- Educational programming - topics for presentations were offered. The top two were Death of Songbirds and Bats. We will consult with the library and possibly cosponsor some presentations they are planning. Motion Joe, second Steve, unanimous. We will talk to the librarian and the town administrator (bats) about resources for speakers.
 

○ Recycling scam of plastics	○ Invasives
○ Death of songbirds	○ Bobcats
○ Population bomb	○ Bats
○ Civil War part2	○ Black bears
	○ wetland /aquifer
- Tom James asked for clarification on whether “Current Use” means that the land owner must open their property to the public. The answer: it is up to the land owner. Tim Brig mentioned that there is a concept of “right to wander” in Europe and that may be present in NH, meaning that people can hike on CU property as long as they stay away from a domicile. (*after meeting from NH Dept of Revenue: “Receiving current use assessment does not require a landowner to open the property to public use, unless the landowner also receives the 20% recreational adjustment.”*)

- Tim Brig asked for advice on an environmental hazard situation adjacent to his home. He was advised to contact the NHDES for assistance.
- Plastic - Mike shared an article about the proliferation of plastic and the chemical transfer to food stuff and humans.
- An informal discussion was held regarding Tim Brig's possible interest in being on the Commission. He was offered an alternate position. He will consider it.

***Upcoming Calendar Items to Note -***

- *April 20 Earth Day breakfast and cleanup*

***Meeting was adjourned*** 7:49 PM

***Next Meeting*** May 16 @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.