



**Bennington Conservation Commission**

*Caring for the Land and Cultivating Community since 1989*

**August 15, 2024 6:30 PM at the TOWN HALL**

*Minutes*

*Call to order: 6:30PM*

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

*Minutes:* From June on a motion from Joe MacGregor and seconded by Jon Manley they were approved unanimously

*Correspondence:* BCC received a copy of a letter to Steve Livingston from NHDES regarding unpermitted stream crossing on Map 18, Lot 3-2, 3-4 and 3-5 making a second request for an after-the-fact wetlands permit application. September 8, 2024 is the next deadline for resubmitting an application.

*Reports*

- River Committee - Hillsborough has put in a new hiking trail near the confluence of the Contoocook and North Branch Rivers.
- Town Hall Update - Tom - not present
- Finances - current budget balance \$1,759.66
  - 2025 Budget information packet was distributed. Will discuss at a later meeting.
  - Zach Allen brought up the motion that any unused balance in the BCC operating budget should annually be transferred to the Conservation Fund. This is in accordance with RSA 41:29 and RSA 36-A:4. This would be done by an annual warrant article. *“To see if the town will vote to authorize the conservation commission to retain the unexpended portion of its \_\_\_\_\_(year) appropriation as authorized by RSA 36-A:5, said funds to be placed in the conservation fund account held by the municipal treasurer.”*

*Old Business*

- Plans for Antrim/Bible hill triangle - The Road Agent has gotten a second load of soil and fixed the granite slab so that the triangle is ready for leveling and seeding. Sunday, September 8 at 9:00 AM will be a work morning to get the project moving. Joe MacGregor and Jane Butler will scour local nurseries for rhododendron and other shrubs for planting.

- Bylaw rough draft review - Tabled until a winter meeting.
- Review of River Float - we had about ten people (Hillsborough, Florida and Connecticut were represented. Weather was good, the water was at a good level. It was an enjoyable time.
- Jane Butler gave a report about her attendance at the Dublin Seminar at Historic Deerfield in June. All the talks were of a historic point of view concerning the natural environment. Topics included history of the maple sugar industry, history of charcoal business, and the gradual understanding that the forests have a valuable contribution to make beside economic exploitation. “Healthy forests make healthy communities.”
- Joe MacGregor gave an update on the building on Whittemore Lake that is out of compliance. The town building inspector hasn’t gotten anywhere with the owner so the situation has been reported to NHDES.
- Zach Allen reported that the VRAP (water study) equipment is operational again and he has taken samples in June and July and will do the August samples this week.
- Steve Willette asked what is the status of the Pierce School 3rd grade Salamander Study in the Edes Forest. The class setup the observation boards in the spring and now that those students are in 4th grade will they continue the study or give over to new 3rd graders. We will contact Jen Sutton, their teacher to see where things stand.
- Jane Butler brought up a cut going on up Route 47 and wondered if there is a permit or exactly what is happening. No one knew anything about it.
- There was discussion about the land reconfiguration at the corner of Map 7 Lot 128 to create a pond. Steve Willette said that DES had given permission for the work and all permits are in order.
- Joe MacGregor asked about Map 7 Lot 31 and the excavation going on there. Apparently permits have been approved.

### *New Business*

- Educational programming - Joe MacGregor had done a bunch of research.
  - It was decided that we would have a speaker series in October and November with a speaker from Fish and Game to talk about moose and a group from Franklin Pierce University to talk about aspects of climate change “Save the climate and Save your money.” Specific dates have yet to be determined.

- Bruce Edes Birthday Walk Sept 7 Joe MacGregor will lead the walk. Jon, Jane and Mike and possibly others will also attend.
- The Commission is going to request a meeting with the Select Board the first meeting after Labor Day.

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

***September 7 Bruce Edes Forest Walk 9 AM***

***September 8 Antrim/Bible Hill Roads triangle work morning***

***Meeting was adjourned*** 7:59 PM on a motion from Joe MacGregor and second by Jon Manley

***Next Meeting*** September 19

***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.