

**Town of Jackson
Conservation Commission Minutes
Regular Meeting - October 2, 2023 - 5:30PM
(Unofficial Until Approved)**

Present: Pam Smillie, Ben Halcyon, Richard Bennett, Thomas Seidel, Ken Kimball.

Attendees: Hank Benesh

The meeting was called to order.

Approval of Minutes:

September 11, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Ken made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as written, seconded by Pam. All approved.

Prospect Farm:

Ken gave update on moving gate. The Forest Service had a spare day and took advantage of the weather to move the gate to the property boundary. Parking along the road to the new location of the gate should not be an issue because drainage ditches limit ability to turn around but will be monitored if it becomes an issue. Ken will get in contact with Gary at the Highway Department to clean up stump dump area to make parking area and to install sign to indicate additional parking. There may be a need to purchase additional gravel for the parking area that would be paid out of the Baker Fund.

There was discussion on Class VI road maintenance, Dick said that the town can do maintenance for Life/Safety concerns such as ambulance access to the parking areas and trailhead but is not obligated to maintain road surface for travel.

Ben will contact Rick Davis to coordinate mowing of the Orchard, Hall's Ledge and cellar holes.

Ken said the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation (JSTF) will also be doing brushing along the road this fall.

Dick had a question about JSTF being a partner for managing invasive plant species and obtaining grant money from NCRS that is not availing to municipalities. Ken said that JSTF does invasive management on the Ellis River Trail and on other properties that they own or manage. Ken also stated that no new knotweed growth has been observed at the former stump dump.

Jackson Falls:

Schedule fall work day for fern planting and wood chip spreading

Thank you to Ken for spreading the remainder of the wood chip pile. Brian has been in contact with Gary Spears to schedule the post installation, original date needs to be pushed back because unable to get properly sized cedar posts. The mill should have 5-6" diameter logs available soon but they will need to be cut to length. There was a discussion about posts for the "Resident Parking" signs, Ben was concerned that if cedar posts were used they would block access to service and install/remove outhouse. If cedar posts are not available in the time window that Gary has to complete work this fall we can wait until spring to install signs. Ben said that the Select Board had asked last year about new signs for the "Resident Parking." Ken will check with the sign maker if there is any available material to do signs but indicated that it may have to purchase a full sheet of the material.

Pam has been sourcing Hay Scented Ferns on a recommendation from Gary Spears, she was quoted \$700 for 100 square feet of sod and would need additional money for soil and peat moss. The material is light enough to be delivered on-site and doesn't need a forklift.

Pam made a motion to spend \$1,000 for Hay Scented Ferns and planting material to be paid from the Wentworth Wildcat Fund, seconded by Tom. All approved.

Ken would like to use one of the cedar posts for the sign at Prospect Farm, Ben said that in discussion with the Trustees of the Trust Funds that when purchasing materials they need to be used for the specific purpose that the funds were created for and that if used at Prospect would need to come from that fund. Ken indicated that he use a regular P/T 4x4 instead.

Grays Inn:

There was discussion about the proposed location of a new fire station at the former tennis court area. A twenty year plan would be a rehab of the existing station, a fifty year plan would look at a new building. What would old building be used for if a new building is built. Dick said the Police could use it and/or to be used for parking.

Community Garden:

There was a discussion about different planting options at the perimeter such as marigolds to keep pests out, and the irrigation system needs attention but has not been an issue with the wet summer.

Wildcat River:

Pam said there had been some interest in volunteering for doing water quality testing. Ben received information that the current VRAP program coordinator was leaving NHDES but that funding for the program should be available next year.

Conservation Easements:

Letters have been sent out to property owners, contact and mailing information has changed on two properties and has been updated in our records.

Wetlands:

NHDES sent notice that no violation has been found regarding a complaint about a property on Ridge Road and are closing the matter.

Ben spoke with Greg Howard from North Country Soil Services who prepared the Expedited Minimum Impact Wetlands Permit application that was reviewed and denied at the September Meeting. He disagreed with our analysis and findings and will submit the permit directly to NHDES for review.

New Business:

Invasive Plant Survey

Ben attended the Invasive Plant Identification Workshop at Pequawket Pond Preserve with members of Eaton and Bartlett Conservation Commissions and Doug Cygan from NH Department of Agriculture. The main takeaway from the meeting is that there needs to be coordination between towns to tackle some of the larger problems and set priorities. Raising awareness of species such as Glossy Buckthorn which is toxic to birds and native plants but can be treated by pulling and monitoring, and Bittersweet which smothers native vegetation can be treated with a diluted percentage of herbicide applied directly to stems. Doug has tested various methods for controlling knotweed such as using hardware cloth staked to the ground to girdle the stems that grow through and the cut and cover method. This method works but he does not see it implemented correctly in many instances. The cut stems need to be covered in a layer of mulch and then covered with plastic which is then covered with a mulch to protect the plastic from UV degradation, the barrier needs to be in place for up to five years and needs to stay intact. Members of the Bartlett Commission expressed an interest in having a spot to impound cut knotweed stems where they could be safely stored while drying and then burned. This would make it easier for property owners who do not have space to store and monitor on their property.

There was a discussion regarding locations such as the transfer station where residents could take cut material to store until it was dry and safe to burn, and how costs for transfer station are split. Residents with an interest in this issue have lots of resources from the state for identifying invasive species and the best management practices. Doug is very active and responds to questions on identification.

Dick wanted to know about a survey inventory. Ben replied the mapping tool that the state uses, <https://www.eddmaps.org/>, is open to anyone to use and homeowners can submit their observations so that the Commission can get a better sense of what invasive species are in the area that cannot be observed from the road or on town property. Dick pointed out a large infestation of Bittersweet on Dundee Road that has been growing over the years with occasional attempts to manage. Ben indicated that we should continue to speak with the Bartlett Commission to coordinate our efforts.

Thank you to Julie and Erik Atwell

All of the Commission members extend a big thank you to Julie Atwell for her efficient and professional management of the town office and to Erik for his well written summaries of town and board meetings. They will be missed.

Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

Dick made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Pam seconded. All approved

Respectfully submitted by Ben Halcyon

To view the full video recording of this meeting visit www.jacksonflicks.com/Jackson