

Conservation Commission, Jackson, NH
Minutes of Meeting DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED
August 5, 2019
Town Offices
5:30 PM

Members present: Tom Seidel, Jeff Sires, Pam Smillie, Brian Byrne, Bill Terry, Ken Kimball
Susan Ross-Parent took minutes

Members of public: Bob Thompson, selectboard; Jesse Keck

Approval of minutes: 2 sets - Tom's shorter version and Susan's late and longer version based on watching Hank's July 1st, 2019, video recording. Disregarding Tom's version. Longer version approved with no changes.

New business

Jesse Keck, Thompson House Farm Manager, came to the meeting to request collaboration between THE and Conservation Commission to start a community initiative composting process on the Thompson House garden property.

Jesses gave a bit of background: Listening to past attempts for community composting, looking at village and interest in Jackson, and the challenges of home (small scale) composting, why not on a larger scale to benefit the land of a local garden? History: informal effort in the past at the transfer station.

Jeff weighed in with ideas of the process at a municipal perspective for siting, permitting, management. Questions from the board: quantity accepted?

Bob Thompson, Selectboard, described a process of accepting compostable items, trenching, covering and cooking and that fits into line with the recycling station and is very receptive to the idea.

Jesse gave his background in farming and farm management. He explained and compared aerobic and anaerobic composting for a pilot idea with 100 households. Anaerobic: trenches underground. safe to compost human-touched food debris. Less smell than above-ground aerobic composting. Anaerobic allows composting of milk and meat products. Challenges: ground has to be workable therefore not an option in the winter.

Human hours include: purchasing buckets with tight-fitting lids, education, and covering of trench daily. Looking to do a 15 ft by 3 ft trench, 18 inches underground. No return for contributors but keeps it out of the landfill and away from wildlife around houses. Season: April-early December (weather dependent.)

Questions from board about: storage of food waste and springtime trenches - would these be machine dug? Which is the target waste: household, family food waste. Discussion around number of households and quantity of compostable material that can be managed. Constraints from zoning - none known. With pilot program no mechanical tools (backhoe...) needed. Plant over the trench within 3-6 months. This will allow THE open up new land around the garden. Benefits for business outweighs the work hours. Jesse asks the CC for:

1. Funding the purchase of: buckets with lids
2. Oversight of program by CC checking in with participants

3. Outreach by CC to help promote the program

How does CC help fund a program that the benefit goes to one local business? (Would less debris at the transfer station be enough to offset the cost needed?)

CC would easily do oversight and outreach but covering the costs may kill the program before it gets its first shovelful. CC and the selectboard can advise on where to get funding via grants, warrant articles, etc. Bob sees a future of a list of businesses and homes accepting compost and lightening the load of the trash Jackson sends to the landfill. CC can write a letter of support for a grant proposal. Subcommittee could be created to oversee the program.

Next move: Jesse will discuss plan with business owners Jeff and Kate Fournier and come back to CC with detailed written plan for CC feedback. Jesse would like to get first trench in before the freeze and get a sense of what needs to be scaled up to do it full time. Plans to weigh the amount of food trash going into the program and not the landfill.

Prospect Farm:

Bob: Selectboard has already added knot weed at the stump dump to the list of spray area (instead of mechanical process.) CC would like to continue discussion regarding spraying.

Questions: cost of spraying to the town? Currently the professional spray contractor is spraying biannually after the plants flower in mid-late September. Brian suggests a roofing product that could be used in a rotating mechanical techniques. Suggestion: adding to the education on invasive species brought to Jackson by selectboard, could an invasive species pamphlet be handed out with the stump dump key when citizens pick it up at the town office? Yes.

Who will create/acquire pamphlet?

Stump dump patch of knotweed: on the left side, about 2500 sq ft. Burning the pulled weed at the stump dump - in the center of dump, safely away from trees.

Other patches on Boggy Brook Rd - needs further investigation.

Tom would like to vote on the spraying. Ken proposed allowing town to spray knotweed at the stump dump. Seconded and all agreed.

Jackson Falls: Tom says: Falls pathways look amazing! Thank you, Pam and crew, for the work and hours put in on paths and native plant sod.

Cost: \$650 for the pallet of native sod plants. Not sure if there's been an invoice, yet, for loam.

Suggestion that a great deal of the cost was transportation, so if this trial works let's consider doing several pallets. Also, for a more professional look, better than twine for barriers - posts and plastic chain. Pilot projects should continue and several areas still to protect. Funds are still available for wood chips, etc. Progress: banks are filling in with plants and the blueberries are back.

Possibly ask for a larger budget at town meeting next March. Possible pilot projects: map out areas for keeping people out of revegetation areas, areas to resod, etc. This will allow for measurement of the square footage.

As for signs - Tom will follow up with Pat Kelley.

Gray's Inn: no new news

Public Comments: see above

Conservation Easements:

Secretary tasks: take notes, update and mail easement letters

Wetlands: no new business

Culvert easement assessments

Jeff explains the state initiative to create a database for culverts, bridges, stream crossings etc.in order to monitor flood hazards and or animal movement barriers. Must attend the training

to get funding to improve the stream crossing. To have the Jackson Conservation Commission participate would need to submit a letter nominating a member (Jeff volunteers - he's done the training.) This would mostly monitor public roads but private roads would also be eligible. Partially funded by Aquatic Resource Compensation Fund. Motion and seconded to send letter to nominate Jeff as CC volunteer.

Bill brought up that the State DOT put in a new culvert that diverts water from Black Mountain Rd. Was this water the main source of water for the wetlands on Valley Cross Rd? Will it affect the wetland? Are the recent changes in water level, no flow to marsh, dead plants due to this or vacancy of beavers? Will this affect the pond's use as a fire pond and will it be changed irreversibly for wildlife? CC member will look into this.

Swift and Saco Local Advisory Committee - Jeff explained it's an official committee - towns have approved and nominated representatives to the committee. Jeff is still interested in working with this committee for the town of Jackson. All in favor of Jeff joining the committee. He needs to be recommended by the CC to the selectboard and the selectboard will have to sign off on the nomination.

Meeting adjourned 7:10 PM.