

Conservation Commission Minutes for March 2, 2020

DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED

Present: Tom Seidel, Ken Kimball, Jeff Sires, Brian Byrne, Bill Terry, Pam Smillie, Mike Dufilho

Hank Benesh filmed.

Minutes: edits suggested

Correction: 6 voted to approve, 1 abstained (Dick Bennett is select liaison – non-voting.)

Feedback to CC member was that minutes were convoluted and so recommended that the secretary distill the discussion – bullet points or summarized not verbatim note-taking. Full official record available on video.

Secretary is paid \$25 per meeting minutes.

Requirements:

attendance

resolution

vote result

Verbatim record not necessary.

Motion and seconded to accept minutes as amended. Unanimous to accept.

Reappointment to the Conservation Commission

open seats: 3

members encouraged to submit letter for reappointment ASAP

New selectboard will accept members

Can discuss minutes-taking once CC members set and new officers chosen.

CC member explains that on other boards (for appointed boards)

example: Planning board

Establish nominating committee in March

Officers are voted/installed in April

This would make it a month later for Conservation Commission because they meet on the 1st Monday of the month so they won't meet before new select board is chosen and then meets to appoint them. Their nominating committee will have to be in April with new officers in May.

Prospect Farm – goals

1. start Land Owner Assessment form from Forest Land Improvement's (FLI) contract - see below.

2. discuss payment of \$3000 quoted for FLI's work

Ken researched sources of funds for the CC: 4 sources found

(From select board meeting it was said that CC would zero-fund \$2000 from Conservation fund - CC minutes say that this was suggested in February CC meeting but not agreed to via vote. Select board reduced recommended amount from \$2000 to \$1500.)

Baker fund - \$63,000 – Ken suggests that payment of FLI bill be paid from here as it was created to help maintain Prospect Farm.

Wentworth Wildcat fund - \$23,000 total in this fund: \$10000 reserved for income-only therefore unavailable - \$13,000 available for projects at the Falls. Process: application to Trustees of Trust Funds. (This was how CC funded the split rail fence at the Falls parking area.)

Conservation fund – \$55,000 - when land is taken out of current use, half goes to town, the other to Conservation Commission for protection of other lands. Used for small land protection projects if town allocation fund runs out.

Town allocation fund – for paying secretary, etc. Now \$1500.

Ken discussed the history of the various funds and when they came to the town.

Tom suggests that the CC budget use of the \$1500 and discussion ensued concerning other bills and from which funds to pay planned bills – and how to pay for bills that don't match the funds' specific purpose?

Need to press for more town allocation funds at Town Meeting?

Annual fees include:

\$300 for secretary 12 meetings at \$25 per meeting

\$200 membership dues to Association of Conservation Commissions

Motion for \$3000 for payment to Forest Land Management for forest management plan to come out of Baker Fund. Approved = 7

Process: chair applies to group who manages the Baker fund (Trustees of Trust Funds or Select board) with fund-withdrawal request and invoice. Fund managers approve or disprove request.

A CC member suggests that if the work is going in to apply for funds from the Baker Trust then perhaps a one-time request could be made for other planned projects at Prospect Farm.

3. Present selectmen CC's recommendation for Prospect Farm general management plan based on research summary of history of will, subsequent town decisions, and votes through the years

(see below) as rationale for recommendation/statement to select board on how Prospect Farm is intended to be used: a general management plan.

Form a subcommittee of 3 members to do research overall management plan and layout blue print. Volunteers: Ken, Brian, Mike.

History of Prospect Farm: Ken has researched the history of the gift of the land at Prospect Farm in hopes of finding original intent of will– discussion concerning the use of Prospect Farm: public park for all or just town residents. Handout of summary given to CC.

A CC member suggests that use plan put together by CC and voted on and approved by town - will supersede previous guidance therefore how CC decides how and what is in the plan and how it's decided is important. Makes it different from previous guidance that was not voted upon. Issues like permitting snowmobiling at Prospect Farm have flip flopped over the years.

Committee will educate the public on the crafting of the Prospect Farm management plan. Create a draft management plan and make available to the public – then public hearing to gather input and educate public – work with town counsel on language of plan to resolve disputes.

Noted: the Conservation Commission has \$50,000+/-, not \$70,000 that was stated at last meeting.

Blue print will include:

goals before end of the year

identifying the resources available (like Association of Conservation Commissions, templates available)

fact-finding regarding past votes

outline how CC is managing current plan as an advisory board

list recreational uses to see conflicts with environmental conditions (new recreation options: ebikes!)

executive summary of current conditions at Prospect Farm

summary of the legal background

guidance for enforcement of rules and law at Prospect Farm – for town meeting next year?

further considerations: The relationship with the Forest Service and the Wild and Scenic Designation of the Wildcat River – near but not abutting the town area. Any privately held land.

Back to Goal 1 - An electronic copy of Land Owner Assessment form from Forest Land Improvement's (FLI) contract will be shared with all CC members. Due date TBD.

CC member confirms that signs are missing from Hall's Ledge turn.

Jackson Falls

Pam will get quote for 2 pallets of sod (blueberries, etc) then Tom will make request to Trustees to Trust Funds. Other CC members will make suggestions for additional needs for Falls revegetation.

Grey's Inn

No new business

Conservation Easements and wetlands permits

A wetlands notification needs to be corrected.

New business

Pet waste issues uphill from the Wildcat River and many other areas have been brought to CC members' attention by townspeople: would CC recommend to select board to create fines for not picking up dog waste? Discussion ensued regarding the job of the CC.

Motion to adjourn: seconded and approved – unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Ross-Parent

Thank you to Hank Benesh for posting video of the meeting
<http://jacksonflicks.com/jackson/conservation-commission/2020-con-commission/con-commission-322020.html>