

**Town of Jackson Conservation Commission**  
**Minutes - January 4th, 2021 - Regular Meeting**  
**- UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED**

**Call To Order:** Jeff Sires, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. Attending were Members Jeff Sires, Ken Kimball, Ben Halcyon, Mike Dufilho, Brian Byrne, Pam Smillie, and Selectman's Representative Dick Bennett. Public attendees included Barbara Theriault, Ruth-Ann Brown, Mike Sachse, Joyce Allan, Hank Benesh, Emily Benson. Audio and video recorded via the Zoom platform will be made available on Jacksonflicks.com.

**Approval Of Minutes:** Minutes from the December 7th, 2020 meeting were reviewed. **Ken motioned to approve the minutes, and Brian seconded. The motion was carried unanimously, and the minutes were approved.**

**Annual Report:** Jeff had sent a draft of the Commission's annual report to the Members for review prior to the meeting. The draft before the Commission at time of meeting had been adjusted from the original draft after some constructive comments from Ken. Pam offered to provide some pictures to use in the annual report, and Jeff agreed to review the pictures and consider to include them where appropriate. **Ken motioned to approve the annual report, and Mike seconded. The motion was carried unanimously, and Jeff stated his intent to finalize the document and have it sent to the town office.**

**Jackson Falls:** Barbara Theriault and Emily Benson, representatives of the Save Jackson Falls (SJF) Committee, were recognized to present the Committee's general recommendations for the management of the Jackson Falls area. The Commission reviewed the recommendations to determine their support on each item and present their comments on those recommendations to the Board of Selectmen (BoS) for further consideration. Prefacing the discussion, Ken asked if the Committee had been in contact with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT). Barbara answered that she had been in contact with a representative of NHDOT to discuss the Committee's concerns and determine practical solutions. Jeff determined that the Commission would discuss all points in a category and then vote to approve them as a group.

On the subject of parking at Jackson Falls:

- The SJF Committee recommended increasing the price of parking fines from \$25 to \$100. Ken suggested that, rather than specifying an increase in fines, the Commission ought to recommend heavier penalties, whether through fines, towing, or other avenues, and allow the BoS to determine how to enact and enforce said penalties. **Members agreed with this suggestion.**

- The Committee recommended improving “No Parking” signage to be more aesthetically pleasant. Brian asked what action the Committee would recommend to make to achieve said improvement. Barbara described the number and type of signs used at Jackson Falls were unsightly. Dick commented that the signage would need to meet NHDOT legal standards. There was considerable discussion on the subject, but **Jeff concluded that the Commission ought to support the general idea of improving the aesthetics of signage with exact details to be determined by the BoS.**
- The Committee recommended not allowing parking along Valley Cross Road. **Members were in agreement with this recommendation** and also suggested posting some “No Parking” signage to indicate prohibition of parking there. Members discussed the issue and determined that recommended signs should indicate prohibition of *roadside* parking.
- The Committee recommended to reserve two parking spots for handicap access. **The Commission agreed with this recommendation.**
- The Committee recommended to keep the Fire Lane. **The Commission agreed with this recommendation.**
- The Committee suggested to consider paving the lower parking lot and paint lines for parallel parking. This would decrease the total number of available spots but would relieve some safety concerns along the road. Members of the Commission raised concerns about how severely this would limit parking, how it might encourage dropping off of visitors, potentially creating a new safety concern, and how water runoff could be worsened by adding non-permeable pavement to the lot. **Jeff proposed that the suggestion be held for future consideration based on later assessment of the effects of implementing other changes.**
- The Committee recommended designating four head-in parking spaces on Carter Notch Road as reserved for Jackson taxpayers, with taxpayer vehicles identifiable by the presence of a Jackson transfer station sticker. Initial comments from the Commission opposed this recommendation. Brian suggested that, if the Commission chose to forward the recommendation to the BoS, the number of spaces be decided by the BoS dependent upon the total number of spaces available at time of consideration. Ben reiterated that such designation of a dedicated parking space would bear the burden of enforcement, similar to the afore-mentioned proposed increase in parking violation penalties.
- The Committee recommended a parking time limit, but **the Commission disagreed with the idea, stating that it would be too difficult to enforce.**

**Jeff motioned to approve the Committee's decisions on the parking recommendations up to and including the paving of the parking lot and painting of lines, and Brian seconded. The motion was approved unanimously, and Jeff stated his intent to formalize the recommendations with respect to the Commission's comments and decisions. Following this vote, Brian motioned to recommend the creation of two to four Jackson taxpayer parking spaces, with the final number to be determined based on further research, and Ken seconded. The motion was split 3-3-0 and was therefore not carried.**

The Committee recommended partnering with the Jackson Chamber of Commerce and recommending eliminating promotion of the Falls as an all-day destination and sharing some "know-before-you-go" information about parking and respectful use of the area. Ben reported that he did some online research and found little promoting the Falls but did find some comments about limited parking posted on the Chamber's Tripadvisor space. Barbara Theriault was recognized to comment; she reported that searching for advertisement outside of official Jackson channels revealed very different results for Jackson Falls. Emily Benson was also recognized to comment; she asked whether the Commission would approve some members of the Committee to partner with the Chamber to review social media promotions. Ken responded that he saw no reason why the Commission would object to such a partnership. Ben commented that a volunteer group could potentially be formed to maintain a more official media outlet for information about Jackson Falls. **The Committee concluded to cooperate with the SJF Committee and other partners to recommend some outreach to businesses and other advertising platforms to promote responsible advertisement of Jackson Falls.**

The Committee recommended moving the portable outhouse to a more accessible location, toward the middle of the Jackson Falls area. Responses to this recommendation among Members of the Commission were split but favored keeping the outhouse in its current location. Ken suggested that some visitors did not seem to know where to find the outhouse but stated that the current location was as aesthetically acceptable as possible. Most Members were in agreement. **Jeff motioned to recommend keeping the outhouse in its current location but add some signage near the parking lot to indicate the outhouse's location, and Brian seconded. The motion was carried 5-1-0.**

The Committee recommended to maintain the current picnic tables at Jackson Falls but not to add more tables. Members of the Commission debated between the benefits and drawbacks of adding more picnic tables. Some argued that more tables would encourage visitors to "set up camp" and spend all day at the Falls, while others argued that additional tables would allow visitors to rest more frequently, important for visitors with less physical capability. Ken suggested removing the picnic tables and replacing them with benches. Pam followed up by suggesting that the tables be retained until they need to be replaced and consider replacing them with benches. **Jeff motioned to recommend retaining the picnic tables until they deteriorate**

**and then considering replacing them with benches, and Pam seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.**

The Committee made multiple recommendations about developing educational material to be dispersed to visitors about respectful use of the Jackson Falls area. There had been some discussion on these recommendations prior to the meeting. **Jeff summarized that the Commission supported recommendations to develop educational materials, reach out to businesses and other advertisers, and post informational signage where appropriate. He also recommended encouraging proper etiquette instead of establishing rules that would require enforcement. The Commission was already developing some signage at time of meeting and planned to continue working with the town and with the SJF Committee to finalize and implement said signage. Finally, the Commission recommended the feasibility and potential funding of a Jackson Falls host program.** Mike further recommended that education materials use language that is inclusive and considerate of different groups.

Ken mentioned that the Commission would soon need to start determining the specific contents of the signage already in development. Mike, who was managing the development of the signage, agreed and proposed meeting with Members of the Commission as well as Members of the SJF Committee to refine the contents of the signage at a later time.

**Jeff motioned to approve the recommendations regarding educational materials, and Brian seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.**

**Prospect Farm:** Due to time constraints, discussion on this item was held off until the next meeting.

**Dundee Forest Project:** Due to time constraints, discussion on this item was held off until the next meeting.

**Wildcat River:** Due to time constraints, discussion on this item was held off until the next meeting.

**Gray's Inn:** Due to time constraints, discussion on this item was held off until the next meeting.

**Conservation Easements:** Jeff noted that the reporting was due on January 15th and reminded Members to submit their reports before that deadline.

**Wetlands:** Due to time constraints, discussion on this item was held off until the next meeting.

**New Business:** The Commission received a letter from the Saco Headwaters Alliance offering assistance in protecting water resources through the Upper Saco Watershed. Jeff stated that he was a Board member of the Alliance and offered to fill out a response to the outreach, proposing to include a presentation from the Alliance at the Commission's February meeting. Ken suggested holding the presentation in March instead, stating that Prospect Farm would take up the majority of the February meeting as a time-sensitive priority item. Jeff commented that the Jackson town meeting would be held in March and considered proposing that the presentation be held during the Commission's April meeting. Members agreed to have the presentation added to the April meeting's agenda and to Jeff completing the response form.

**Public Comment:** Public attendees did not express any public comments for non-agenda discussion.

**Jeff motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Ken seconded. The motion was carried 5-1-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted by Will Reisig