

Town of Jackson  
Conservation Commission Minutes  
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting  
November 1, 2021  
(Unofficial Until Approved)

Present: Jeff Sires, Chair; Ken Kimball, Brian Byrne, Pam Smillie, Mike Dufilho, Tom Seidel, Ben Halcyon, and Alternate Dick Bennett.

Attendees: Christopher Wejchert, Catherine Wejchert, Francis X. Lyons, and Ellen Chandler. Via Zoom: Emily Benson, Peter Benson, Edmund Harvey, Rober Najar, and videographer Hank Benesh.

Chairman Sires called the public hearing to order. This hearing is to discuss the proposed Prospect Farm General Stewardship Plan. Chairman Sires thanked Ken Kimball for his diligent work on the current draft plan, and additionally thanked everyone else on the Commission for their input. Chairman Sires stated that the purpose for the hearing was to get public input on the draft so that it might be incorporated into the plan for consideration at the 2022 Town Meeting. This draft includes some minor changes that happened due to comments and concerns by the Selectmen.

Member Ken Kimball then gave a brief summary of the plan's goals, which are as follows:

- To meet the intent of the donor as well as the town's vote when it accepted this property.
- To describe the past and current ordinances, town votes and agreements, and how well they match with the town master plan.
- To update the recreational use regulations and policies.

Member Kimball then discussed the results of the questionnaire regarding Prospect Farm, stating that the majority of respondents were not aware of the boundaries, specifically inasmuch as they were unsure of whether or not the land was private, town owned, or National Forest.

Member Kimball gave some history regarding how Prospect Farm was willed to the town with the primary intent being that the land would be used for recreational purposes. He stated that recreation has changed over time, but currently there are five ordinances that are directly related; noise, litter, fireworks, camping, and class VI roads. He further addressed the town agreements, or MOU's, for use of Prospect Farm, one of which is Jackson Ski Touring. He talked about the owners of the abutting properties and what they will and will not allow on their property.

Member Kimball reviewed regulations and recommendations, citing three specific recommendations for Prospect Farm:

- Why it's important to follow a forest management plan as developed by a professional forest manager. The manager must understand the recreational caveat involved, as that was the intent for the land, not forestry.
- An ecosystem inventory could be beneficial to help understand some of the unique species there.
- Determining the impact that the stump dump has caused on the native soil, bringing in foreign soil and non-native species.

Member Kimball mentioned other areas for consideration, including signage and updated information in the kiosk, parking, motorized vehicles, biking, hunting, camping, hiking, walking, snowshoeing and pets, and what was both allowed and prohibited.

The draft plan also looks at long range plans and recommendations, which there are three:

- Exploring potential expansion if abutters were ever interested in selling.
- A longer term arrangement with Jackson Ski Touring Foundation.
- Effects of climate change on Prospect Farm.

Member Kimball opened up the conversation for public comment. Suggestions included more guidance regarding commercial use, expanded parking, and clarifying who can use Prospect Farm.

- Is it open to the public, or limited to Jackson residents only?
- If it is limited, who is considered a resident?
- What type of permitting should be in place for commercial use, such as guided dog walking services?
- What authorization would be required for adding or altering any trails for, as an example, a bike trail?

Chairman Sires made a motion to move the draft forward, incorporating language that both clarifies commercial use as well as obtaining required Selectmen approval. The Commission will continue the process for submitting the draft for the Town Warrant. The motion was seconded. All approved.

Chairman Sires ended the public hearing and started the regular meeting at 7:56PM.

Chairman Sires wanted to note that Dick Bennett would be a voting member for the regular meeting since he was told that Tom Seidel would not be able to attend the meeting, (even though he was actually able to attend).

Next was the regular meeting agenda:

Chairman Sires made a motion to take on a new minute taker. The motion was seconded by Member Byrne. All approved.

## **Jackson Falls**

Chairman Sires thanked everyone involved in organizing and installing the sod, especially Pam for ordering the supplies. He also thanked Selectman Frank DiFruscio for coordinating with the Highway Department for additional help.

It was suggested that after the Prospect Farm Stewardship plan was complete, it would be a good idea to develop one for the Jackson Falls as well. This would provide history, management plans, and future recommendations all in one document.

Discussion regarding the newly sodded area and the recent storm led to a consensus that there are a few areas around the Falls that should be monitored during big storms. Final invoices for this project need to be tallied and paid.

The signs that were added to the Falls for parking this past year are the standard road signs that the highway department ordered. Next year, the Conservation Commission should discuss updating these signs to fit into the surroundings better.

The Commission cited the need to continue the discussion on path surfaces that could accommodate handicapped individuals at the Falls. Additionally, the outhouse should be turned or moved to the lower lot to accommodate the handicapped and provide easier access for all. The fence at the Falls was originally a temporary fence, but it seems to be working well, so if everyone agrees, Eastern Green will fix the broken rail. Also, a decision will need to be made in the Spring regarding the kiosk.

### **Community Garden**

Someone has offered to help set up the community garden. He has participated in a community garden in his hometown in Massachusetts. More information needs to be gathered on how to get started, including resources and potential grants. A location needs to be determined.

### **Wildcat River/Wild & Scenic Grant Update**

The Jackson Grammar School kids have been working with Tin Mountain, collecting samples, writing questions, comparing results and making conclusions. This is great as their work also incorporates some of the requirements that need to be performed by the commission. The kids have also noted the impact of the population growth to town, including as an example, the increased trash in the woods.

### **Conservation Easements**

There is one easement due at the end of the year. The documents will be forward to all members again.

### **Wetlands**

There are no updates for wetlands.

### **New Business**

A sign seems to be missing up at Prospect Farm, and it may need to be replaced.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

Chairman Sires made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Byrne seconded. All approved.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:  
Erik Atwell

**To view the full video recording of this meeting visit [www.jacksonflicks.com/Jackson](http://www.jacksonflicks.com/Jackson)**