

Town of Jackson
Conservation Commission Minutes
Regular Meeting
April 4, 2022 - 5:30PM
(Unofficial Until Approved)

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

Attendees: Videographer Hank Benesh.

The meeting was called to order.

Approval of Minutes:

March 7, 2022 Meeting Minutes - **Ken Kimball made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Pam Smillie. All approved.**

Prospect Farm:

General Stewardship - Plan Town Meeting - Update

Ken Kimball said that the article did pass at Town Meeting, so they now need to decide how to implement the Plan. The apple trees did get partially pruned (about 20-30%) with the help of the grammar school students. The debris that was left behind will need to be cleared for mowing, and the rest of the trees will also need to be pruned. Bryan said that to complete this process in full, it could take several years. Bryan would like to see the school program become an annual activity. Mike suggested that it could also be a volunteer opportunity for the Town residents, such as a volunteer community workday.

Ken said that since the stump dump will be closed, they will need to work with the highway and Forest Service to move the gate and convert that space into more summer parking. The kiosk in that area will also need to be updated, which Ken has volunteered to do.

A resident has expressed interested in possible mountain biking trails. This resident will come to a meeting at some point to discuss. Ken said that an ecological survey may need to be done to properly evaluate such a proposal.

Bryan took a moment to thank Jeff Sires for all of his great work as Chairman. Jeff will not be continuing as a member of the Conservation Commission. Ken said a new Chairperson would need to be appointed. Ken Kimball made a motion to nominate **Ben Halcyon to be the next Chair, seconded by Mike Dufilho. All approved.**

Dick Bennett said that he would be interested in submitting his letter of interest to become a full voting member, to fill the recent vacancy.

There was some discussion on the procedure for the Commission to purchase land.

Jackson Falls:

Ben inquired about the process for acquiring materials and how they are paid for. Invoices should come to the town for approval, as well as for withdrawal from any funds. Expenditures also need approval from the Commission.

Path Material, Grant Opportunity - Kiosks

Jeff was able to find someone who is able to construct the kiosk. The cost will be \$1,700, which is the installed price. He should be able to have it completed by May. **Mike made a motion to put down a deposit of \$850 to Recon Trails for the kiosk, seconded by Tom Seidel. All approved.**

Mike suggested that the Commission meet with the Road Agent to finalize the placement of the kiosk.

The path material is estimated at \$700 and will be purchased soon. The port-a-potty location will be reviewed to see if it needs to be turned for easier access.

Gray's Inn Community Garden:

There were approximately ten people who showed up to the Community Garden meeting. Jeff said everyone agreed that the timeline seemed ambitious, but hopefully doable. There will be a follow up meeting on Thursday, April 14th at 5PM at the site to review the location, and also the space needed for the library in that same area. Some of the questions that came from the meeting were about long term and future funding. Pam is working on the bylaws that will need to be reviewed. There was discussion on how the committee would be formed, such as: a non-profit, a co-op, or a committee. There was also further discussion on the layout of the garden and how the beds would be built (would they be on the ground or would raised beds be constructed). Once a final plan is in place, prior to the start of the project, it will be presented to the Selectmen for approval. Ken said that if the vegetable garden was not attainable for this season, people could use this space for a flower garden just for this coming season.

Wildcat River:

Tin Mountain Wild & Scenic Grant Update

Mike said the field trip to Prospect Farm was great. He said that there is no longer a need to leave this item on the agenda unless everyone would like updates regarding the river (but the project relating to Town updates is complete). Ben asked if there will be future water monitoring. Mike said there should be, but it might be only on a two or three year basis. Bryan said that it might be worth monitoring the goats near that water to make sure waste in the water is not an issue.

Conservation Easements:

Nothing to report.

Wetlands:

There was an update from DOT regarding the culvert replacement on Black Mountain Road. The question that the Commission asked was regarding fish passage. The response was detailed, and did confirm that there would be no issue regarding the passage.

Ken mentioned the FYI email that was forwarded from the Town regarding the Valley Cross Road Bridge project and the native blueberries that could be impacted. No action is needed.

Mike asked about the request from the Selectmen for the Conservation Commission to weigh in on the potential sale or easement of the Town owned Jackson Highlands property. The sale did not pass at this year's annual Town Meeting. Dick Bennett gave some background information on this property. The Commission did not feel that they need to get involved in the discussion.

New Business:

Black Mountain Road Manure Pile

Chairman Halcyon said that there have been no changes to report. It was suggested that the Commission draft a letter for the Selectmen to send to the property owner on this topic.

Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

Dick Bennett made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Tom Seidel. All approved.

Respectfully submitted by Erik Atwell

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