

Nelson Conservation Commission
Minutes of the Meeting of October 24, 2019

Draft

Kathy Schillemat opened the meeting at 7:02 PM. Also present were Anne McBride, Tom Newcombe, Rebecca DiGirolomo and Rick Church. Guests: Eric Masterson of the Harris Center for Conservation Education, Laura French of Meadowsend Consulting and Janet Yardley

Approval of Minutes:

Tom moved approval of the minutes of 10/15/2019 (second Anne second) All voted to approve.

Rick moved that the Conservation Commission affirm the decisions reached at the October 15th meeting as it may not have been properly posted. (Second: Tom) All voted in favor.

Forrest Management Plan for Partridge Woods:

Laura French summarized and explained the approximately 150 page draft Forest Management Plan her firm has written for Partridge Woods. She explained that the findings are summarized by stand starting on page 61. Stands are sections of the property that share a common forest type and are not always contiguous geographically. She described the forest as needing to recover from several "high grade" cuts in the past where most of the marketable stems were removed. There is no area that must be cut now and few areas that it would make sense to cut now. In her opinion we could just let the forest grow. Her big picture: this property is characterized by its large size and its accessibility. It has been cut hard. There are a few harvesting opportunities and a number of things we could do to improve the stands for recreation forrest regeneration and improved wildlife habitat.

There were no threatened or endangered species found on the property. There are few wet areas; no vernal pool locations were found.

Laura outlined several management steps that could be taken:

1. Weed out invasive plants. There isn't much on the property. We should pull up barberry and buckthorne when we find it.
2. Maintain the road system for public access.
3. Blaze and paint the boundaries

There followed a general discussion about where to go from here. What are the opportunities to invest in the property for public use and the best growth for the forest? Are there harvest opportunities that could be used to fund those investments? Should the Commission pursue

the designation of Partridge Woods as a Town Forest so that the management responsibility would be more clearly in the Commission's hands? (RSA 31:112)

What happens next? Eric Masterson said that the Forest Management Plan will suffice as the stewardship plan required under the terms of the conservation easement, though a trail development plan should be included as well. This should be complete by June 30, 2020. Laura suggested that the public be exposed to the plan by means of a tour of the property. Rick suggested that be followed by a public meeting where the plan could be explained and public input sought. Should we seek authority to manage under RSA 31:112 at the 2020 town meeting? Anne said we needed time to process the report ourselves first.

Laura asked that we send her corrections and undertook to get us a map of the stands on the property that was easier to read and interpret. Stands would be color coded so it is easier to tell which pieces form a single management stand.

Laura, Eric and Janet left the meeting t 9:05.

Conservation opportunity:

Kathy indicated she wanted to bring the Commission up to date on a possible conservation acquisition and/or easement. Rick moved (Tom second) the Conservation Commission go into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3 II (d) to discuss the purchase of land or conservation easements. All voted in favor of the motion.

The Commission reconvened in public session at 9:14.

Rick moved (second by Kathy) to seal the minutes of the non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3 III. All voted in favor of the motion.

Kathy moved that the meeting be adjourned (Rick second). Passed

Rick Church

Secretary