

DRAFT Minutes

Nelson Conservation Commission

Thursday, October 21, 2021

Present: Dave Birchenough, Brenna Kucinski (Select Board liaison), Anne McBride, Tom Newcombe, Kathy Schillemat, Kathleen Vetter (arrived 7:28), Sarah Wilson, Janet Yardley

Visitor: Bill Dunn (for Partridge Woods agenda item)

Kathy called the meeting to order at 7:18 pm in the Library conference room.

Introductions and NCC membership:

Kathy welcomed new NCC members Dave Birchenough and Kathleen Vetter (upon her arrival at 7:28).

Kathy and Brenna then clarified Brenna's role as Select Board liaison to the NCC. This is a non-voting role meant to ensure timely communication and coordination between the two boards. Kathy mentioned that Select Board members are allowed by state regulations to serve as full voting members of conservation commissions upon appointment by the Select Board, if desired.

Partridge Woods:

Bill Dunn presented two artifacts discovered off the trail near the Comfort Day cellar hole in Partridge Woods – an old coin (possibly a mid-1700's English farthing), and a skinning knife. Bill requested that the artifacts be retained by the NCC for public appreciation instead of being re-buried where found as stipulated in the Stewardship Plan. Kathy suggested that we may revisit the 'treasure hunting' policy at a future time and meanwhile will transfer these artifacts to the town archives for safekeeping. All agreed.

Bill then wanted to discuss access to the Wheeler Trail via the Town's right-of-way which adjoins his property. The Harris Center, heirs of Ethan Tolman, and the Town all share this access. Anne mentioned that the deed language for this right of way is vague, and does not specifically grant public access. Bill is OK with people walking on his land to access the trail and noted that the land is in current use anyway, which allows public access. But he does not want people parking in his driveway. Kathy assured Bill that future revisions to the Partridge Woods trail map would be discussed with him and his wife prior to publication to make sure it clearly designates public vs. private areas along the right of way.

Minutes:

After brief discussion, Janet moved and Sarah seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the September 23rd meeting as emailed by Anne. Sarah reminded everyone that Draft minutes should be emailed as soon as possible to Edie for posting on the Town's web site. Sarah will be responsible for sending all corrected / approved minutes to Edie. She will check with Edie about some previous minutes which have not been posted.

Future Meeting Time / Minutes:

After some discussion, everyone agreed that the third Monday of each month at 7:00 would be a better meeting time going forward. Adjustments can be made when there are Monday holidays. The next meeting will therefore be Monday Nov. 15 (Janet will do minutes). We will skip December due to holidays, then meet on Monday Jan. 10th (avoiding the MLK holiday on Jan. 17th) – Dave will do those minutes.

Expenditures:

Kathy reviewed the membership benefits of the NH Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC). Our annual renewal will cost \$250. Kathy reminded members that the Town will reimburse the \$35 annual meeting registration fee for any members who sign up, or alternatively, members may bring filled-out registration papers to Edie, who will arrange for the Town to send a check. This will be a virtual event on Saturday Nov. 6th with keynote speaker and workshops. Sarah moved and Janet seconded a motion to approve the NHACC membership renewal and any annual meeting registration expenditures, as well as reimbursement of \$48.30 to Anne for the printing of conservation easement and survey documents. All voted in favor.

Memorandum of Understanding:

The MOU between the NCC and Select Board regarding Homestead Lane access rights was briefly reviewed to clarify some points. Several members have already signed and the rest will stop by the office to sign when they can.

New parking lot for Partridge Woods access:

Questions remain about the process for finalizing LWCF approval for the new parking lot. Although no additional grant funds are being requested for this small project, LWCF approval is still required by the terms of their original grant to construct the new parking lot and discontinue public access via Homestead Lane. Anne completed one on-line submission from the list of items emailed by Bill Gegas, but discovered that the process is very time-consuming and complicated. Kathy previously sent Bill Gegas copies of the MOU and Select Board letter to the Pattersons, which explain in detail everything that is proposed. Members questioned why the documentation for the original Partridge Woods

grant application would not satisfy the requirements for a small parking lot on the same property. Kathy will contact Bill Gegas again to further clarify what is still needed.

Mike Tarr has estimated a cost of \$6k to build the parking lot, including tree clearing. Sarah moved and Tom seconded a motion to approve this expense and pay it from the NCC's Land Use Change Tax account. Tom reported that the current balance in this account is \$14,641. Kathy said more funds are expected shortly from upcoming LUCT proceeds. There was agreement that construction should be done before winter even if some LWCF approval steps take longer. Kathy will re-confirm with Bill Gegas that he's OK with this plan.

Easement monitoring:

Kathy suggested that we move forward with first steps, including getting familiar with the deeds, surveys, and other documentation that Anne has assembled for the parcels which NCC is responsible for monitoring. Anne will send a link for accessing her Google drive where the documents will be shared. Assignments were made to split up the research:

Shonk property: Kathleen and Anne

Putzel property: Dave and Tom

Hanchett property: Kathy and Sarah

Stasiowski property: Janet and Brenna

Erosion on the Wheeler and Osgood Link Trails:

Kathy reported that Rick Church and John Bunce will be installing water bars and a culvert to mitigate erosion on these trails. They will be accessing the trails from Homestead Lane, as authorized by the MOU.

Trail Map:

Kathy reported that the Partridge Woods trail map has been updated to remove the continuation of Homestead Lane to the Wheeler Trail. This solves the immediate conflict with the MOU and reflects what is actually on the land at this time. The next version will show the new parking lot and any other tweaks needed. Anne raised a question about the process for input and approval by the Select Board and Harris Center of trail changes, as stipulated in the stewardship plan. Brenna stated that the current Select Board is well informed of NCC activities including trail maintenance from the improved liaison arrangement. Janet added that the Harris Center is also in the loop on trails activity and not inclined to micro-manage.

The large map for the kiosks was never completed by the Antioch grad student we engaged, who has since left. Dave suggested a follow-up with a contact he knows at

Antioch. It was also suggested that perhaps Elizabeth and the Trails Committee could get the large maps for the kiosks printed.

Kathy moved and Dave seconded a motion to adjourn at 9:28. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Newcombe