

DRAFT Minutes

Nelson Conservation Commission

Monday, October 17, 2022

Present: Dave Birchenough, Brenna Kucinski (Select Board liaison), Tom Newcombe, Kathleen Vetter, Janet Yardley

Visiting: Nina Iselin (potential NCC member)

Janet called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm in the Library conference room.

Minutes:

After review, Janet moved and Tom seconded a motion to approve the minutes from the September 19, 2022 meeting. All voted in favor.

Conservation Moments:

Members shared some recent sightings from the natural world, mostly involving bears.

Partridge Woods:

Janet and Brenna mentioned that a warrant article to designate Partridge Woods as a Town Forest would be premature for 2023 town meeting. Research into the details of the process needs to be done, and the pros and cons need to be researched with public education and input. There is no urgency from a logging standpoint as much of the mature timber in Partridge Woods was harvested before the land was sold.

Dave reported that the new bridge over Bailey Brook is nearly finished. The trails committee will submit a bill to the NCC for reimbursement of purchased materials once the tally is complete.

The kiosk recently removed from Homestead Lane has been installed in the new Town parking lot on Old Stoddard Rd. A mailbox for trail maps needs to be mounted. Janet will ask Rick Church for two mailboxes so one can be temporarily mounted while the other is painted / decorated by Nelson School kids.

Trail clearing has been done along the Baily Brook Trail.

The map poster still needs to be updated. Dave will meet with Steve Lamonde and maybe Rick Church on the details.

Land Use Change Tax proceeds:

Tom confirmed that all Partridge Woods improvements and expenses since the land was acquired have been paid from the Conservation account which is funded from Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) proceeds. Expenditures from this account have been controlled by the NCC since a warrant article authorized this

procedure many years ago. Tom handed out an accounting of LUCT income and expenses since 2018 which Edie maintains, showing a current balance of \$28,443.

Brenna said the select board is considering a change to the allocation of future LUCT proceeds, via a new warrant article, so some of the proceeds would go into the general fund to reduce taxes. Any % split between the conservation and general funds can be approved. There was a consensus that the NCC could manage future maintenance and operating expenses on such a basis, now that larger Partridge Woods projects such as the Forestry Management Plan and new parking lot have been accomplished. The existing \$29k balance would stay in the conservation fund after any change in future allocations.

Tom reported that the Conservation expendable reserve fund has a current balance of \$135,897. This fund was created from the remainder of the original Partridge capital reserve fund after purchase of the Partridge Woods land. Tom explained that the NCC has, to date, been preserving this fund for a future capital investment (land acquisition or conservation easement), and not for operating expenses and projects.

Additional conservation topics:

There was some discussion of options for plastic recycling. Some towns are collecting stretchable plastic wrap under a program explained at the '#10towns' web site, which awards a trex bench for each 500 pounds collected within a 6 month period. Plastic grocery bags can be returned to Hannaford and other stores for recycling.

The Southwest Regional Planning Commission newsletter is mailed to the Town office. Kathleen agreed to pick up and review these newsletters for relevant topics.

There was some brainstorming about possible land conservation opportunities. One suggestion was to consult with the Harris Center for ideas. Another idea, which has been discussed several times in the past, was to investigate the Great Meadow. Most of this wetland is in Harrisville, but some is in Nelson. Dave has observed development activity along a portion of the shoreland, including a road network, two very large docks, and possible future utilities. It is not known at this stage what the owner's intentions are.

DES Wetlands Permit:

Janet passed around a DES 'Permit by Notification' from the Bogers on Lake Nubanusit. The plan is for replenishing a pre-existing beach on the shoreline with sand. The legal procedure is for the Town Clerk to give a copy of all DES shoreland applications to the NCC for timely review, so questions or concerns can be raised before final approval. Unfortunately there is a 2-week deadline for NCC review, so the logistics are difficult.

Next meeting: Monday, November 14, 2022 at 7:00 in the Library conference room.

Dave moved to adjourn at 9:04 and Tom seconded. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Newcombe