

Nelson Conservation Commission
Minutes of the Meeting of January 16, 2020

Draft

Kathy Schillemat opened the meeting at 7:03 PM. Also present were Rob Germeroth, Gary Robinson, Tom Newcombe and Rick Church.

Guest: John Taylor-Maule

Right of Way over a portion of Partridge Woods property. John Taylor-Maule owns a lot on Old Stoddard Road that abuts the only frontage Partridge Woods has on that road. John's property is west (toward the village center) of the Partridge Woods frontage and has approximately 300' on the road. John and his wife plan to build a house there. He asked that they be permitted to use the road and bridge that Ethan Tolman built into the Partridge Woods property before the town acquired it. He says there's no reason to build a second road and stream crossing right next to one that exists for ecological and economic reasons. John suggests that he'd improve the road and that the public could use it for access to the property. John even suggested they might be willing to trade some small pieces of their lot that are across the stream to compensate the town.

Members of the Conservation Commission voiced support for the concept noting that he would probably require a legal right of way over the road. While supporting the idea, Commission members identified several obstacles: Rick reminded the group that the state had been very fussy about rights of way in the grant making process and that we had solved the ROW issue at the cell tower by carving that property out of the land we acquired. Kathy discussed our easement with the Harris Center. Rick will call Bill Gegas at the state to discuss this and Kathy will call the Harris Center.

Approval of Minutes:

Rob moved approval of the minutes of 1/16/2020, (second Gary) All voted to approve.

New Members for the Commission:

Rick and Tom's terms are with Town elections on March 10th. Rick will be leaving the Commission; Tom would like to stay on as an alternate. A number of names of people were suggested as new members. Calls will be made to gauge their interest.

Town Meeting Prep:

Tom agreed to present the Milfoil Article at Town Meeting.

Upcoming Events:

The Sullivan Conservation Commission is holding a “Button Up” workshop and is looking for a co-sponsor. There would be no cost to Nelson. Tom moved that the Nelson Conservation Commission co-sponsor the event. Gary seconded the motion. Passed

Free workshop on “bioblitzing” at Distant Hill Gardens March 28th at 10AM

Partridge Woods Forest Management Plan:

Laura French will present the forest management plan to the public April 25 at 11AM. There will be a formal presentation in, perhaps, Town Hall, followed by a walking tour of the property. Publicity via library email list and Town web site. Gary will design and produce a poster.

Right of Way to Great Meadow Property: Kathy has talked to Harvey and Frankie Tolman about a right of way across their property to allow us access to the landlocked property owned by the Town on the Great Meadow. They agreed to give us one before the property is sold. The subdivision of their property across from their farmhouse has been approved.

Rick mentioned that the Commission should, now, unseal the minutes of the non-public sessions held to discuss this project. He will email those minutes to Commission members for consideration at their March meeting.

Kiosk Poster Project: Rick reported that Melissa Sandor, a student at Antioch, is willing to produce our kiosk posters as a class project. Rick has met with her and has sent her shape files, photographs and captions. She and Rick will get suggested posters prepared and present them to the Commission at its April meeting.

Nelson Cleanup: The Commission set the 2020 Nelson Clean Up Day for May 2. There will be a signup table outside the library from 8:30-10. Rick still has trash bags from last year.

Mailbox:

Kathy passed around a sheet to sign up for NH Association of Conservation Commissions email.

Treasure Hunting in Partridge Woods:

Bill Dunn and his children have been using a metal detector on cellar hole sites in Partridge Woods. They have found a number of things including an old coin. Rick had asked Bill to turn the coin over to Bert Wingerson for the Town Archives. Bill had agreed. Bill feels that, as the property is owned by the public, he and others have the right to things they find there just as hunters would have the right to take deer on the property. He points out that the property was acquired for public recreation and treasure hunting is an example of that.

Rick suggested that hunting is a right specifically regulated by the state and that wild animals do not belong to the property owner. The land, its content and use, isn't free for citizens to take what they like. An appropriate analogy would be more like a public library where, in spite of public ownership, citizens may not just remove books they may want.

In the meantime Bill Dunn mentioned his coin to Mathew Tolman who claimed it as "personal property" not conveyed by his father, Ethan Tolman, with the property. Rick suggested putting a NH Division of Historic Resources sign on each cellar hole within the property. He will work with NHDHR to change the wording to put Nelson's name on the sign and will get a quote to have them made. In the meantime Bill Dunn has retained the coin. It seems we will have to seek legal advice.

Gates for Partridge Woods:

Rick turned over two padlocks and keys to Rob. They match the one already installed on the gate at Homestead Lane. He suggested the Commission put up gates at the Brickyard parking lot and on the old road at the Dunn's with signs prohibiting vehicles with driven wheels. He suggested the gates be made of a "friendly" material like pressure treated wood not steel. The dirt bike tracks seen on Osgood Hill may be just the beginning of property use that can cause damage and erosion.

Steam Improvement:

Rob brought up the opportunity to improve road/stream crossings with funds from the Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund. Kathy reported that the Town's new bridge on Old Stoddard Road isn't adequate and that there are a number of culverts and bridges that do not allow the passage of migrating fish.

Meeting adjourned 8:34PM

Rick Church, Secretary