

**Town of Amherst
Conservation Commission Meeting
Sunday October 23, 2016**

Attendance: J. Harvey - Chair, R. Hart, L. Gilman, V. Bennison, R. Clemens, W. Robertson, J. Hardner-Alt (voting for R. Clemens)

Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM

Administrative Reports

Minutes

- Amendments to meeting minutes from 10-12-16 should include:
 - At the bottom of page 1, regarding the Great Meadow, the bullet should be revised to read:
“Daryl ~~received a copy of a permit for a project that was done about a year ago.~~ informed Zack Anton, an Eagle Scout candidate, that his boardwalk project in the Great Meadow was never permitted and Daryl put the applicant in touch with DES.”
- V.Bennison moved to accept minutes with revisions, L.Gilman seconded, minutes are accepted as amended (amendments noted and to be sent to Jessica Marchant by J. Hardner)

Finance Report – J. Harvey

- No update

Planning Board Update – R. Hart

- No update -- Planning Board has not met since last ACC meeting

Special Topics

Coyote Hunting permit request

- Patrick Crawley asked for permission to hunt coyotes at night on ACC properties and presented a map with a proposed hunting area in the Betty Arnold Forest.
 - Mr. Crawley described his understanding of population dynamics of coyotes.
 - R. Clemens indicated (by email) that he was opposed to granting the request. His reasons were that reports were not received from Mr. Crawley last year, as had been promised, and that there is risk of disrupting the pack dynamics by killing the alpha male.
 - Mr. Crawley indicated that he did not actually hunt last year, so there was nothing to report. He also explained that he is aware of the issue related to killing the alpha male in a pack, and that he attempts to avoid it by selecting smaller coyotes.
 - A motion was made by W. Robertson to approve the request, and it was seconded by L. Gilman. All voted in favor, except J. Hardner who abstained.

Lindabury Orchard Plan

- Sally Wilkins presented the output of the Lindabury Orchard Working Group on options for future management of Lindabury Orchard (see attached presentation, and complete plan on file). Commission discussion ensued.
 - W. Robertson motioned to add \$5K to next fiscal year budget request (\$3,450 for converting 80% of the lower orchard to hayfield and the remaining balance to control of invasive species and poison ivy), and J. Hardner seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.
 - The town (DPW and Rec) needs to handle the mowing of the orchard in order for this budget to be accurate.

- R. Hart volunteered to write a management plan for the Lindabury Orchard. J. Hardner motioned to accept R. Hart's offer, seconded by W. Robertson. The vote was unanimous in favor.
- L. Gilman asked to have more time to read the complete report from the working group before the Commission takes any further decisions.

Management Areas

Meadows/Forests/Invasives

- L. Gilman lead an invasive species workshop on 10-22-16 for trail stewards.
- Lee presented the idea of an app for crowd sourcing invasive species mapping. He also requested that Commission members think about any other trail steward observations that might also be useful to collect in such an app – to be delivered to Lee in December.

Trails

- D. D'Angelo has appointed a trails sub-committee composed of: V. Bennison, W. Robertson, F. Montesano, W. Ludt, J. Bement, L. David
- The sub-committee will develop standards for management of trails and development of new trails.

Water Resources

- No update.

Infrastructure

- No update

Trails

- W. Robertson made a short presentation on the Betty Arnold Forest. He reported that the Ray and Lee Desmarais trail was roughed in by a team of eight volunteers, including support from NEMBA, on 10-22-16. Remaining benching and blazing to be completed soon.
- W. Robertson went on to display a map of the Desmarais trail and a proposed trail (attached), with the proposed name of "Cricket Crossing", that completes a loop in the area.
- V. Bennison motioned to approve the proposed trail to be named Cricket Crossing, seconded by R. Hart. Discussion ensued about completing other approved trail work before starting new projects.
 - J. Hardner reported that approved work at Haseltine has generally been completed, with a few refinements underway.
 - W. Robertson will be managing volunteers to dismantle Nathaniel Drive staircase.
 - J. Harvey will coordinate work to complete Mail Rd clearing.
 - After discussion, the vote was unanimous to approve new trail, to be named Cricket Crossing.
- V. Bennison has ordered blazes and nails and will give to W. Robertson since he will be travelling for the coming weeks.

Management Planning

- No update.

Education and Outreach

- V. Bennison is working on linking Google Maps URLs for trail maps to ACC website.

Roundtable

- An Amherst firefighter approached V. Bennison to volunteer himself and colleagues for trail work. V. Bennison will follow through in finding an appropriate project.
- Trail blocked by fallen tree at Grater Woods needs to be opened sufficiently to allow a hiker to easily pass. W. Robertson agreed to take care of it.

- J. Hardner proposed that more outreach should be undertaken to inform the community of the trails on ACC properties. He will proceed in getting some press coverage for Haseltine as a pilot for a more comprehensive outreach by ACC to showcase individual areas over time.
- Thanksgiving and Christmas may cause a conflict for upcoming Sunday meetings. Schedule TBD Chairperson.

V. Bennison moved to adjourn at 10:14 PM and L. Gilman seconded. Vote: All in favor.

DRAFT