

**Town of Amherst  
Conservation Commission Meeting  
Wednesday January 11, 2017**

**Attendance:** J. Harvey, D. D'Angelo- Chair, R. Hart, V. Bennison, J. Hardner- Alt, B. Beckley- Alt and Frank Montesanto- Alt

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01pm and stated Jared will vote for Rob Clemens, Bruce will vote for Lee Gilman and Frank will vote for Wes Robertson.

**Administrative Reports**

**Chair comments**

None

**Minutes**

Wednesday December 28<sup>th</sup>

**J. Harvey moved and B. Buckley seconded to approve the minutes of December 28<sup>th</sup> as submitted.**

**All in favor**

**Finance Report- John**

John reported the balances, deposits and withdrawals that have occurred in the accounts since the last report.

John also discussed some contracts in progress. The contract for the lower Lindabury 8-acre hayfield has been drafted. Regarding the Lindabury upper orchard close-mowing, there is a handshake deal with the BOS that someone will do the mowing next summer. The ACC may have to pay, but nothing is settled yet.

Daryl asked if the mowing has been budgeted for next year. John said he will check and ask to be put on the BOS agenda. **John moved to spend up to \$1500 from the town budget if available or the conservation budget if not for close mowing of Lindabury orchard. Vick seconded. All in favor**

John reported that the Bragdon North and South hayfield contracts are in draft form.

**Planning Board Update- Rich**

- The senior housing discussion was tabled to March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Director of Recreation discussed a disc golf course going in on Baboosic Lake road by Rte. 101. There will be a lot of people walking through there and they will avoid the wetlands. Conservation may want to put up signage to educate about the wetlands. There is also a new bike course there. ACC had also discussed putting signs up at the community gardens as well. Daryl will reach out to some Eagle Scouts and Girl Scouts. She will also talk with Craig to set up a walk-through of the disc golf course with Vick.
- Small zoning amendment changes were discussed as well.

**Topics**

- Lindabury Orchard- FOTO role, Orchard Manager appointment

The ACC continued their discussion about FOTO recommendations.

Recommendation 4:

Bruce suggested having an ACC land manager to manage all of the properties rather than one person for this property only.

47 John suggested not having a Lindabury Orchard manager and explained why. There will now be specific  
 48 contracts for the mowing which will be clearly identified. The trees and rocks that had to be taken out  
 49 are almost all gone. The farmer is going to get rid of all the poison ivy in the hayfield. After next year,  
 50 there won't be much for us to worry about at that location.

51 Jared thinks there should be certain people in charge of certain pieces of land. What he described of  
 52 himself taking care of Haseltine is what Daryl sees as a steward.

53 Daryl is in favor of having a point person to have clean communication with FOTO- at least for now.

54 Frank said FOTO plans to have a multi-member board and propose a yearly plan to the ACC.

55 Rich said having an ACC member manager to be the communication link is a good idea. Jared said there  
 56 are specific people on the ACC in charge of certain things, but when issues come up that aren't specific  
 57 to those responsibilities, tasks fall through the cracks.

58 **Vick moved and Rich seconded to accept recommendation 4.**

59 Rich said this doesn't need to be etched in stone. If we find something's not working, it can be altered.

60 **Vote: 6 in favor – 1 opposed. (J. Harvey)**

61 **Jared moved to appoint Frank as the Orchard Manager. John seconded.**

62 Frank said he is willing to take on this job. He is setting up an infrastructure team that he will be able to  
 63 oversee/manage.

64 John asked if there will be separate trail stewards for those trails. Daryl and Frank agree there should be.

65 John asked if Frank could be the contact person for the hay farmer to post public notices when he is  
 66 going to hay or when poison ivy is being sprayed. Frank said he would.

67 Daryl asked if anyone else was interested in managing this orchard. There were none.

68 Bruce asked who and how the remaining ACC land will be managed in terms of forest and invasive  
 69 management. He sees this individual manager as a trend. Frank said just because he becomes the  
 70 orchard manager doesn't mean he becomes in charge of all decisions. Lee would still be the meadow/  
 71 invasives expert that Frank would connect with when needed.

72 **Vote All in favor**

73

74 The ACC decided they are not at a point where they are ready to vote on the other recommendations.

75

- 76 • BAF- actions from issues brought forward 12/14

77 Daryl said she would like to come up with some action items based on that discussion.

78 Jared met with Frank and Wes and came up with these action items:

79 -write a letter to the abutters to let them know what we are doing there and clear up any factual errors  
 80 from their presentation.

81 -plant trees and shrubs along the boundary

82 -put in parking railings to define the actual parking area

83 -put a moratorium on trails for the area closest to their homes

84 -put trail etiquette signage up

85 Daryl mentioned other issues the abutters mentioned: gates, kiosk size

86 Frank said he will have blueprints for three different sized kiosks for ACC review.

87 Rich said we may be able to put in some plantings to help mask the kiosk.

88

89 Daryl continued with the abutters' issues: The process of notifications to abutters should be improved.

90 We should set up a time to review how things are going now that we've opened up some trails to biking.

91 We could ask the community how they think the biking is going. Jared suggested forming a list of items  
 92 we want feedback about.

Discussion about after dark: There is no ordinance that mandates it. It's up to the ACC. Should the ACC close trails down at dark? Daryl said she is not in favor of that. The ACC discussed what 'dark' means. In the winter that can be 4:30pm. They could close certain hours (12am-4am for example).

-They will ask the police to monitor the parking lots more frequently overnight.

-Jared will talk with DPW to minimize the plowing to the small lot size and Frank will manage dragging the logs into place

-Daryl will draft a letter to the abutters and send the draft out to the ACC for review.

- Meetings: Length, solutions

Daryl suggested having two meetings a month. One for regular business and public comment. The other is more like a work session where discussions occur regarding policies etc.

Daryl said she will be more specific in the agendas and pre-meeting emails to clarify what the discussions are about so members can prepare their thoughts ahead of time.

Rich said we now have a bunch of managers. He thought they could schedule management area reviews that are lead by those managers and are noticed to the public so they can hear the (quarterly) updates.

## **Management Areas**

### Water Resources- Rob

Bruce has a resource on this topic. He's the author of the report that describes the Amherst aquifer and the findings about it. He suggests the ACC reach out to Richard Moore of Bedford for information.

John mentioned at the last meeting the urgency of this hydrology study and has discovered another urgent public concern: The Amherst middle school and Wilkins school parents were notified that lead has been found in both schools in certain areas.

### Meadows/ Forests/ Invasives- Lee

Lee was not here so this item wasn't addressed.

### Infrastructure- Frank

-Frank is putting together an infrastructure team

-talked with John about the bigger projects and talk to Jim O'Mara about any guidelines they may need to follow regarding the big bridge projects

-He will have the three sets of blueprints for kiosks by the first February meeting

### Trails

-Betty Arnold and Haseltine updates-Wes

Wes was not here so this item wasn't addressed.

-Joe English Trail Challenge- Race Day Trail Closure/ Trail prep

Daryl heard from George Bower asking to close down the trails for the race. John said the concerns in the past were clean up after the race, but they've always cleaned up well after.

Daryl said they are logging on part of their usual course so that needs to be addressed. Last year the Hemlock and top of the Bicentennial were trimmed improperly and she will contact George to discuss this and work on a training program with Wes.

-Jared said they are not making progress on maps right now. NRPC ported over the new trail maps they have made. We need to print maps in large format which hasn't been done. A cost-effective printing

option needs to be researched. John mentioned that the Community Development office just hired a GIS person who starts in a week. Jared will talk with the office about having him work on this.

#### Management Planning

-Trails standards- Wes

Wes was not here so this item wasn't addressed.

-Management Committee- John/Jared

Jared read the forest management plan and had some questions:

He wondered if the members are all up to speed on understanding the plan and why some schedules are the way they are.

Young Forest project- he found a guide to help inform the public on why the ACC is logging or cutting back.

Rich volunteered to be the education/ outreach coordinator.

Jared has written a one-page description and taken some photos to go up in the kiosk at Haseltine.

#### Education and Outreach

-Earth day Sustainability Fair- Wilton

They are inviting all of the commissions in the corridor. Does the ACC want to have a booth and talk about the river? Rich will communicate with George. Bruce said a Souhegan student wrote a guide to the river and it's in the library.

They are also having a discussion called 'Birds of a Feather' where the commissions can discuss this topic.

#### Easements and Properties

-New (old) easements, Land Committee- Daryl

She has confirmed 30 conservation easements- none are new. She would like to set up a map to show the easements.

The Land Committee started today. Easement encroachments will be part of that conversation.

-2 properties, discussion

Bruce has 5 properties he is working on for possible acquisition.

Property 1 is a new one that came in: lot 006-20-002. It was a 100- acre farm. It's coming onto the market and Bruce was asked if the ACC is interested. An appraiser has quoted \$1200 to do an appraisal report. **Bruce moved to assign \$1200 from the conservation fund to have this appraisal done. Vick seconded.** It's a five-acre lot. **All in favor**

Property 2 involves a land swap of equal- sized lots. The exposure to the commission would be the legal fees. Bruce said it would connect B&M with Pond Parrish. The ACC looked at the maps.

Property 3: 36 Pond Parish

The ACC noted the high wildlife priority of this property.

Property 4: Brook Rd

The matter is considered closed by both Bruce and the owner.

Jared had a procedural issue. An amount of money per acre was never discussed. Since then, he has done some research and the land looks undevelopable, so it's de-facto conserved so they can let it go.

188 Property 5: Bruce has nothing new to report. The owner has not responded.  
189  
190 Round Table  
191 Jared had a follow-up with the owner on Austin Rd and they are discussing with their family what they  
192 want to do.  
193 Vick has half of the blazes and Wes has the other half if anyone needs them.  
194 Daryl asked for progress on the rock wall at the top of Grater Rd and the tree in Grater Woods. Nothing  
195 has been done. She set up a work crew for tomorrow at 9am with Daryl, Frank and Vick.  
196  
197 She's heard concerns about the logging project, but the logging on those properties is being done legally  
198 and on private property.  
199  
200 Public Comment  
201 Will Ludt – Heritage Commission Chair  
202 Like last year, they are inviting the ACC to join the Heritage Commission on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January to do  
203 some snow shoeing in Joe English. There will be two sessions: 10-12 for families and 1-3 for advanced.  
204 Snow shoes will be provided.  
205  
206 **John moved to adjourn at 9:32am. V. Bennison seconded. All in favor**  
207  
208 Respectfully submitted,  
209 Jessica Marchant