

**Town of Amherst  
Conservation Commission Meeting  
Thursday February 23, 2017**

**Attendance:** D. D'Angelo- Chair, R. Clemens, L. Gilman, R. Hart, P. Lyon- Selectman Representative,  
B. Beckley- Alt and Frank Montesanto- Alt

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:04pm and stated Bruce will vote for J. Harvey.

**Administrative Reports**

**Chair comments**

The Chair had asked Bruce to write up some language about the Commission's mission regarding trails and he said he had done so and will get it to her.

**Minutes-Sunday January 19th**

This item was tabled

**Old business- Names of volunteers read into minutes**

The Chair recognized the following volunteers/ stewards into the record so that they are covered by town insurance while working as trail stewards:

John Alderson	Stephanie Wales	Sandy Bradbury	Nancy Bennison
Deb Farrow	Larry David	Brent Forman	Danielle and Steven Pray
Dave Williams	Leslie Hinspeter	John Bement	Mark and Karen Woodbury
Roxanne Harmon	Alan Cort	Joe and Teresa Nielsen	Mary Snaith
Alyssa Parker-Roberge	Patty Lott	Kevin Wilson	Bob and Gail Kokko
Faye and Joe O'Neill	Tyler Davis	Rick Crocker	James Callahan

**Lee- update on Monson lot abutter issue with dead tree**

Daryl showed a map of the Monson lot on the screen. The issue is there is a tree on the ACC property with risk concerns. Lee hasn't had a chance to connect with the abutter yet. Daryl will send the abutter an email tonight with an update.

**Update- Sustainability Fair preparations**

R. Hart described his plan to present the Lindabury Orchard and its management plans at the sustainability fair.

**Update- Austin Rd property (MapGeo- computer-centric valuing challenges)**

The Commission has previously discussed using the MapGeo information to help evaluate properties for land acquisition. Daryl did a walk-around of the Austin Rd property with Mr. Austin. This property is 15 acres with half of it wet and half of it buildable upland. When looking at the map layers, the wetlands don't show up and the wildlife habitat stops right before the property lines.

Daryl suggested that this section of town does not seem to be accurately mapped. She did some research and found this property hasn't been surveyed. She wanted to bring this information to the Commission because it's good to know the map may not be accurate before they solely use the map tool to evaluate properties for acquisition.

The Commission discussed the property a bit and decided to do a site- walk on Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup> at 1pm.

**Property management/ usability policies: horses, camping, fires**

The Commission discussed their opinions of permitted and non-permitted uses of ACC land. No official policies were voted on, but it was confirmed that any fire would need permission and a permit from the fire department. They discussed whether to allow camping and if they should identify a couple of good camping sites. Horses were mentioned, but no policy was deemed necessary. The only issue is with the infrastructure of the trails/ bridges and if they would support horses.

Frank arrived to the meeting at this time (7:43pm) and Daryl stated he will vote for V. Bennison.

Frank was asked about issues he sees with horses on the trails and he said horses have separate needs on trails than humans do. There was a horse that went through part of a bridge not too long ago. If we have to change the infrastructure to support horses, it will get costly.

It was suggested that signage be posted in the kiosks that the trails are horse-friendly for riding, but to be advised to ride at your own risk. The ACC may want to look at directing horse riders around certain structures that won't support them.

The website and what information should be posted on it was discussed. Lee suggested having a 'Restrictions' section or page. Anything restricted could be listed such as no bikes or horses on specific trails listed, fire and camping by permission only. Whatever is not listed is assumed permitted.

Gordon suggested the following language: Our trails were not designed for horses. Proceed at your own risk.

Will Ludt of the Heritage Commission noted that the metal detection policy is in the process of being drafted.

There was a brief discussion about the ACC dropbox and storage issues. Jared needs to give dropbox access to both Gordon and Simon in the office.

The ACC needs to eventually have limited access to the Town of Amherst network to keep their documents.

**Topics**

- FOTO update- Frank

FOTO had their first meeting. During the meeting they drafted their objectives for 2017. The entire document is in the dropbox.

Some highlights:

- They held an election for President, Vice-President and Treasurer. Frank is the President.
- There will be quarterly meetings with minutes taken
- Tighten financial plan
- Expand membership
- Ciderfest FB page is now the Lindabury Orchard FB page and will inform public
- Resume tree care
- New policy of disposing of pruning debris immediately after work is complete
- Address signage and communication network
- Add a kiosk
- Complete the shed
- Increase public knowledge and use
- Fundraise

- Mitch Greany- Souhegan senior project request

Mitch's project is: what environmental patterns have impacted the maple syrup industry in NH.

He asked the ACC for permission to tap 8-10 maple trees for sap collection data. His research of sap collection will be compared to historical, national data regarding sap production per tree. His intention is to see how climate change, this year's drought and other environmental factors have impacted sap production in NH. The sap produced will not be used for sale of maple syrup. He is requesting permission to use trees on ACC land because there are not enough maple trees on his personal land. He will use taps that are 5/16" (health spouts) and will only tap one per tree resulting in no harm to the trees.

Bruce asked where he wants to tap. 4-5 trees at Joe English and 4-5 trees at Pond Parrish. The taps will be removed at the conclusion of the project.

Daryl asked for pictures and a copy of his final report.

He will donate the unused sap to local maple syrup producers and will begin tapping next week.

**R. Clemens moved to approve this project as proposed. B. Buckley seconded. All in favor**

**R. Clemens moved to enter non-public session at 8:42pm to discuss land acquisition. R. Hart seconded.**

**Roll Call vote: B. Buckley-yes, F. Montesanto- yes, D. D'Angelo- yes, R. Clemens- yes, L. Gilman-yes, R. Hart-yes.**

At 9:14pm, the ACC reconvened in open session. **L. Gilman moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session for 60 days. R. Clemens seconded. All in favor**

Gordon explained to the ACC that there is an RTP grant that is due at the beginning of June for up to \$80,000. This could be used for bridge replacement. However, to apply many items need to be prepared:

- Design
- Cost estimate
- Schedule
- Matching funds for 20% of the cost
- National Heritage review
- Understanding of wetland permits needed

### **Round Table**

Bruce said Alex is going to tap trees on Grater Rd this season.

Bruce said Jim Callahan needs another project to fulfill a project for UNH. Bruce wants him to create the Black Bear trail that will connect Grater Woods and Converse Woods.

Frank forgot to mention earlier that there were 19 people at the FOTO meeting which was promising. He also informed the Commission that Noble went up for sale today. It is 121 acres and is listed over \$2 Million.

**R. Clemens moved to adjourn at 9:38pm. L. Gilman seconded. All in favor**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jessica Marchant