



Town of Amherst, NH

Conservation Commission

FINAL Minutes

Barbara Landry Meeting Room

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

Conservation Commission members in attendance were: Rob Clemens, John Harvey, Frank Montesanto, Lee Gilman, Peter Lyon, and William Widmer - Alternate. Also in attendance: Kristan Patenaude

I. Call to Order

Rob Clemens called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

II. Girl Scout Bronze Medal Proposal

Girl Scout Troop 22802 presented a proposal to earn their bronze metal. They wish to help the community and the environment by raising awareness about composting. They hope to place posters and distribute packets at local trail kiosks.

In response to a question from Mr. Widmer, the Troop explained that they planned to attach plastic, weatherproof boxes to potentially 2 or 3 kiosks around town. They would like to leave the boxes up permanently, so that other materials could be distributed in the future.

Mr. Harvey suggested adding contact info to the packets so that the public would know where to go to get more information.

Mr. Clemens explained that the ACC might not be the best avenue for the Troop to get their message out to the public. He suggested displaying the info at the transfer station, the Garden Club, or the community gardens/Joshua's Park.

In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, the Troop explained that they're hoping to finish the project near mid-May, but have through the summer to complete it.

Mr. Clemens suggested that Mr. Vick Bennison be the Troop's contact in regards to which kiosks they can post at and when an appropriate time to do so is.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Gilman to accept the placement of Girl Scout informational composting posters on 3 or so of the ACC's kiosks.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

35 **III. Chair Comments – none.**
36

37 **IV. Minutes (from 3/14)**

38 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Gilman and SECONDED by Mr. Harvey to approve the*
39 *meeting minutes from March 14, 2018 as amended.*

40 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*
41

42 **V. Treasurer's Report**

43 Mr. Harvey stated that this Treasurer's Report doesn't contain the end of the month bank
44 statement from March, so its figures are only approximate. Next month the Conservation
45 Fund account will go up by about \$50,000, due to dispersal of the additional warrant article
46 LUCT funds and LUCT money coming in from people building on current use property.
47

48 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Montesanto and SECONDED by Mr. Widmer to accept the*
49 *Treasurer's Report as presented.*

50 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*
51

52 **VI. Planning and Permits**

53 Mr. Clemens explained that the Commission had nominated Mr. Vick Bennison to be the
54 interim representative on the Planning Board; however Mr. Bennison is no longer able to
55 fill that duty. Mr. Gilman agreed to attend the next Planning Board meeting as the ACC's
56 representative, and that the ACC would further discuss the opening from there.
57

58 The group discussed a subdivision plan and a lot line adjustment proposal but had no
59 comments to make on either.
60

61 Mr. Clemens stated that Tom Carr, of Meridian Land Services, will be on the May agenda
62 to discuss at least two properties with the Commission.
63

64 **VII. Grasslands Management Plan**

65 Mr. Harvey presented the Grasslands Management Plan, which is aligned with the
66 Conservation Plan, and thus aligned with the Board of Selectmen budget scheme.
67

68 In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Mr. Harvey stated that there are
69 approximately 250 acres of ACC grasslands, and that the amount of grasslands located in
70 the town is much larger than that.
71

72 Mr. Clemens stated that there is an interest in utility ROW (right of way) pathways. These
73 could be taken advantage of by clearing the land adjacent to them to benefit and create
74 more shrublands.
75

76 In response to a question from Mr. Montesanto, Mr. Gilman explained that girdling two
77 trees together creates a dead snag and can enhance ecology of the area.
78

79 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Gilman and SECONDED by Mr. Montesanto to approve the*
80 *Grasslands Management Plan for inclusion in the Conservation Plan.*

81 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

82
83 **VIII. Invasives Management Plan**

84 Mr. Gilman explained that this is currently between an outline and a plan. The group then
85 discussed the plan.

86
87 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Clemens and SECONDED by Mr. Harvey to initiate the*
88 *Great Meadow project, phase I – mechanical control of invasives, utilizing the previous*
89 *estimate from Vegetative Control Services of up to \$5,000 from the Conservation Fund.*
90 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

91
92 In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Mr. Gilman stated that VCS will need to
93 coordinate with Charlie Koch, as he knows the Bragdon property the best, in order to
94 determine the scope of the invasives project there. The area will be grid searched with
95 backpack sprayers. Next month Mr. Gilman will bring the Bragdon invasives report from
96 VCS to the Commission.

97
98 **IX. Trail Development & Use**

99 Ms. Kristan Patenaude stated that she has 500 of the ACC's new Trail Brochures ready for
100 dispersal. The group discussed distributing these at PMEC, Town Hall, the Joe English
101 Challenge, and the Souhegan Sustainability Fair.

102
103 Mr. Montesanto explained that he's starting to plan out the Highland I beam Bridge and
104 would like to purchase the super pressure-treated lumber in order to get the project started.

105
106 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Montesanto and SECONDED by Mr. Widmer to allot up to*
107 *\$1,200 to buy the timbers, miscellaneous hardware, and other possible items for the*
108 *Highland Bridge project if there is money left over.*
109 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

110
111 Mr. Clemens requested a project schedule from Mr. Montesanto for this.

112
113 Mr. Montesanto explained that the Hemlock Trail Bridge was not put back after the logging
114 was finished. He will need help getting the bridge back in place, and needs to have it done
115 before the Joe English Challenge.

116 Mr. Montesanto also explained that the bottom half of the canoe port ramp on Boston Post
117 Road was torn off at some point over the winter.

118 Mr. Montesanto stated that the Girl Scouts are still working towards putting their benches
119 on the trails. He'll make a trail infrastructure request form to be distributed to trail stewards
120 and ACC members.

121
122 In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Mr. Montesanto explained that the barriers at
123 Pond Parrish will need to be replaced and he's been in contact with DPW regarding that.

124
125 Mr. Montesanto also stated that he dropped the SnowDog off at the Recreation Department
126 yesterday.

Mr. Clemens stated that Mr. Bennison made a report regarding slash left on the Bicentennial Trail. Mr. Wes Robertson was going to go check and clean it off.

X. Upcoming Events

1) Souhegan Sustainability Fair – April 14

Mr. Clemens explained that the Souhegan Sustainability Fair will be held on Saturday, April 14 from 10am-4pm at the Wilton-Lyndeborough High School. There will be a commissioner round table from 2-3:30. He plans to bring copies of the Trail Brochure to distribute.

2) Amherst Clean Up Day – May 5

Mr. Widmer and Ms. Patenaude presented their plan for the Amherst Clean Up Day on May 5 from 9am – 12:30pm. There will be blue litter bags and gloves distributed at 3-4 sites throughout Amherst. Two of these sites will be at the Amherst Fire Department, South Station, and at the Green. There will be flyers distributed and an article to appear in the Citizen.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Widmer and SECONDED by Mr. Montesanto to allocate up to \$200 for Kristan Patenaude's materials and labor on the Clean Up Day project. Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

3) PMEC Tree ID Workshop – May 5th

Mr. Clemens explained that the Recreation Dept is co-sponsoring this event with the ACC.

4) Joe English Challenge – May 6th

Mr. Clemens explained that George Bower has requested approval to put up signs along the race course and to close the associated trails for this event. The ACC has supported this in the past. The event raises money for the Amherst Land Trust.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Clemens and SECONDED by Mr. Widmer to approve the Amherst Land Trust's use and markings of ACC property for the Joe English Challenge.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

XI. Round Table

Mr. Montesanto stated that the Lindabury Orchard group will be meeting by the end of the month to discuss plans. They are thinking about putting in 2 picnic tables and some Adirondack chairs. They will also be discussing this year's Ciderfest. Mr. Montesanto explained that he will also meet with the town to discuss mowing of Lindabury. The lower portion which was sprayed last year, they are going to keep the trails on and let grow back in. They will then spray it again and see if the poison ivy comes back, and then brush hog it. They are still on schedule to spray in September.

Mr. Harvey explained that he attended a Chestnut Tree Seminar in Bedford. They discussed cross-breeding in order to breed out the blight. He also attended the Saving Special Places seminar on conservation easements. He picked up some tips on conserving the lands around high-value water supplies.

Mr. Clemens explained that there is a grant project to provide five million dollars for conservation lands that are overlying high-value watersheds. Applications for grants up to \$500,000 can be submitted, with a requirement of finding some match of funds.

Mr. Clemens also stated that the Bedford Land Trust has a grant to do some work at Joppa Hill. They'd like to sit down with the ACC to see if both groups' efforts there can align.

The group discussed an issue with beavers and rising water levels on Thorton Ferry I. They decided to get more information on the issue before making decisions on what to do.

Mr. Clemens explained that the ACC will be electing officers at the May meeting.

Mr. Gilman stated that he has submitted 5 grant applications in order to bring in funds for ACC projects. Mr. Clemens explained that he would like a clear target on what the grant money will be used for and to make sure it aligns with the group's priorities.

Mr. Widmer stated that the digging for the chestnut trees will take place on April 28th at 9am. He is requesting help from the Boy Scouts. The trees will then be planted on May 19th, and he's hoping to have volunteers from the Girl Scouts for that day.

Mr. Clemens adjourned the meeting at 10:02p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*