

TOWN OF AMHERST
Conservation Commission

July 13, 2022

APPROVED

In attendance: Jared Hardner, John Harvey, Rich Hart, Bill Widmer, Peter Lyon – Board of Selectmen Ex-Officio, Lee Gilman [7:05pm], Steve Lutz (Alternate), and Christian Littlefield (Alternate).

Staff present: Kristan Patenaude – Recording Secretary (remote).

Vice Chair Jared Hardner called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

1. Chair Comments

None at this time.

2. Minutes: April 13, 2022, May 11, 2022, & June 22, 2022

Christian Littlefield sat for Frank Montesanto. Steve Lutz sat for Lee Gilman.

Bill Widmer moved to approve meeting minutes of April 13, 2022, as submitted.

Rich Hart seconded.

Voting: 6-0-0 motion carried.

John Harvey moved to approve meeting minutes of May 11, 2022, as submitted. Bill

Widmer seconded.

Voting: 6-0-0 motion carried.

Christian Littlefield moved to approve meeting minutes of June 22, 2022, as submitted. Steve Lutz seconded.

Voting: 5-0-1 motion carried [B. Widmer abstained].

3. Treasurer's Report

Bill Widmer reviewed the Treasurer's Report. He explained that the Land Account currently has \$1.007M in it.

John Harvey moved to approve the Treasurer's Report, as presented. Christian

Littlefield seconded.

Voting: 6-0-0 motion carried.

4. Planning & Permitting

Steve Lutz reviewed the most recent Planning Board items. He stated that the Planning Board approved the Walnut Hill proposal at its last meeting with certain conditions.

Lee Gilman entered the meeting at 7:05pm.

TOPICS

5. Trail Steward Program Update

July 13, 2022

APPROVED

Rich Hart stated that the trail steward program is going well. He noted that Larry David, in particular, has been doing a large amount of work on all of the trails in Town. Rich Hart explained that he would like to have a get together for the trail stewards at some point and asked for the food to be covered under the ACC's budget.

Bill Widmer moved to expend up to \$300 from the Educational Outreach account to fund a picnic for the trail stewards. John Harvey seconded.

Voting: 6-0-0 motion carried.

6. Alice Towne Lot Tree Removal

John Harvey explained that there is a small area located in front of the Great Meadow. Rick Crocker has volunteered to mow this small 5–6-acre lot and maintain it. There is a line of trees marking the boundary between the Town-owned lot and Rick Crocker's house. One of these large trees has been dropping limbs onto Mr. Crocker's property. Mr. Crocker paid for the tree to be cut down by Wilkins Lumber for \$1,600. John Harvey suggested that the Commission reimburse Mr. Crocker half of the cost, as the tree was on the border of both properties.

John Harvey moved to allocate \$800 to reimburse Rick Crocker for removal of a tree on the border of his property and the Great Meadow property from the Land Account. Jared Hardner seconded.

Discussion:

In response to a question from Peter Lyon regarding if the tree was located on Town property, John Harvey stated that it is believed the tree split the boundary of the two properties.

Voting: 6-0-0 motion carried.

7. NRPC/Town GIS Support

Jared Hardner explained that he spoke with NRPC regarding additional GIS support for the Commission/Town. He discussed a retainer contract with Sara Siskavich, NRPC, and discovered this was already being discussed via Nic Strong for the Town. Jared Hardner explained that he is working to determine if the Commission can roll its needs into the Town's proposal with NRPC.

John Harvey explained that the Heritage Commission, DPW, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and the Community Development Office all have interest in additional GIS support. This will involve ongoing discussions with the groups and NRPC.

8. Baboosic Lake Paper Street Disposition

Peter Lyon explained that the Town owns two lots, 28 and 29, along this section of Baboosic Lake in Washer Cove. The landowners of lots 25-21 and 25-22 came to the Board of Selectmen asking for their lot lines to be adjusted. Part of this proposal would include the Town giving up two nearby right of ways. The landowners assert that these are paper streets, which the Town is working to confirm. One argument being made is that, if these roads are paper streets, the Town

July 13, 2022

APPROVED

is required to give them up as they have not been maintained in a number of years. The two Town-owned lots, 28 and 29, are marshy and mostly wet. He asked if the Town/Commission has any interest in these lots.

In response to a question from Lee Gilman regarding access to the lots if the paper streets are given up, Peter Lyon stated that Town Counsel has stated that the Town will always have a legal right to access the lots, however it is unclear where this access would be from if the streets are given up.

John Harvey suggested that the Commission review these lots in terms of conservation of wildlife species or climate change items.

Bill Widmer explained that other lots have had No Trespassing signs placed on them, preventing access to the Lake.

Rich Hart suggested that these lots could be used for public access for boats. Bill Widmer stated that this would likely impact the wetlands.

Lee Gilman stated that wetlands slow water flow into the Lake and are, thus, conservation resources. He asked what the value would be for someone else to acquire these lots and the impact this might have.

Christian Littlefield noted that, unless the Town needs to give up ownership of these lots, it likely should not, based on not knowing what could happen to them in the future. The land could dry up as the Lake changes and then these lots could become buildable.

Rich Hart agreed that the nearby owners could potentially purchase the lots and expand their houses.

The Commission agreed that it would like to keep these lots as Town-owned.

9. Other Business

Rich Hart explained that the Cider Fest is under consideration to occur this year. This would likely be at the end of September or beginning of October.

John Harvey explained that an anonymous donor has allocated enough funds for each Commissioner to have his/her own ACC shirt. If the Commission opts for a less expensive type of shirt, there may be available funds to also purchase hats.

The Commission agreed that it would prefer t-shirts and hats, and that these would be useful to wear in situations when working to educate the public or provide outreach. John Harvey stated that he would continue to work on this item.

10. Non-Public Session - (pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3 II (d))

July 13, 2022

APPROVED

- Review of potential property acquisitions.

Jared Hardner moved to enter into Non-Public Session - (pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3 II (d)), to review potential property acquisitions at 7:53pm. John Harvey seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Jared Hardner – aye; Rich Hart – aye; John Harvey – aye; Bill Widmer – aye; Lee Gilman – aye; and Christian Littlefield – aye; 6-0-0 motion carried.

Jared Hardner moved to exit Non-Public Session. John Harvey seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Jared Hardner – aye; Rich Hart – aye; John Harvey – aye; Bill Widmer – aye; Lee Gilman – aye; and Christian Littlefield – aye; 6-0-0 motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*

Minutes approved: August 10, 2022