

Town of Amherst
Conservation Commission Meeting
Wednesday May 10, 2017
7:00pm

Attendance: D. D'Angelo-Chair, L. Gilman, R. Hart, R. Clemens, W. Robinson, J. Harvey, V. Benson, P. Lyon Selectman Representative

B. Widmer (Alt) and Staff: Planner S. Corson

The Chairperson Daryl called the meeting to order at 7:04pm. Daryl announced that the ACC Officer Elections would take place first on the agenda. She proceeded to ask for nominations for Chair.

Wes thanked Daryl for her work in the past year as Chair, noting the new initiatives she championed and for her leadership in the position. Wes continued that he felt John was fit for the position because he had been Chair before and does a good job of getting the best out of every Commission member.

John accepted Wes' nomination, but expressed concern that the ACC would miss out on the value of new leadership in the role of Chair.

John and Daryl asked if anyone else wanted to make a nomination. Peter clarified for the Commission that this was the correct process.

Rich nominated Rob. Rob thanked Rich for the nomination. Rob discussed how he had been nominated last year and was interested, but not convinced he wanted to be Chair. This year Rob accepted the nomination, and proclaimed he was ready to step up into this position if the Commission approves.

There were no more nominations. Wes and John voted for John. Daryl, Lee, Rich, Vic, and Rob voted for Rob. Rob becomes Chair. There was a round of applause.

Following the Chair election was the Vice Chair election. John nominated Daryl for the position. John explained that the ACC benefits from Daryl tireless efforts and he would like to see her continue as Vice Chair. Rob seconded. Daryl accepted the position noting that she would be a very engaged and active Vice Chair.

Daryl, now Vice Chair, nominated John to remain as the ACC Treasurer. Wes seconded. John accepted and said it is a fun position.

There were no Chair comments.

The Vice Chair suggested to the Chair that this evening's guests are moved to top of the agenda. The Chair agreed and invited the Eagle Scout Zach Anton and father Joe Anton to address the Commission.

Zach gave a general overview of the proposed graduation event he would like to have in the Great Meadow this coming Saturday, May, 20th. Zach said he appreciates the Commission's concern about having a truck drop off a tent in the Great Meadow due to the sensitive grasses in the area. The Eagle Scout reassured the Commission that his family and their guests would treat the land with care.

Rob noted problems in the past with this site and traffic problems. He explained that there was almost a tragic crash that featured a bicycle and automobile not long ago. Rob suggested there should be no vehicle traffic access to the property, guest should instead use the Wilkins School's parking lot.

John echoes Rob's thoughts and agrees that guests should park at Wilkins School. John added that because of the site's proximity to the village, Great Meadow's green space should be treated in the same manner as the Town Green.

Rob asked if around forty to fifty people was a fair approximation for attendance. Joe Anton answered, yes.

Vic asked if there was going to be police there helping folk cross the street from Wilkins School to Great Meadow. Zach answered, no.

Rich motioned to accept the proposal from the Anton family, Wes seconded. All voted in favor, motion passes.

The ACC's next guest was Nashua Regional Planning (NRPC) Commission GIS Manager Sara Siskavich. Sara gave a general overview about what NRPC does. She also provided an explanation of the MapGeo application. She complimented the ACC for letting NRPC know when there is misinformation, and changes to trail information. This communication helps keep the mapping current, and allows the NRPC to share this information with the State of New Hampshire GIS Clearinghouse called GRANIT. She added that NRPC is happy to do contribute the labor to fix these datasets.

Sara said the NRPC is in the process of ranking the data in their trail layer. Ranking criteria relates to how spatially accurate the data is, and whether attribute information about permitted uses, bridge/stone wall crossings, etc. are updated. By keeping this kind of inventory, NRPC hopes to better understand what trail networks need more attention.

Sara noted these efforts correspond with preparing data for GRANIT to release as part of a Statewide Conserved Land Dataset.

Sara also presented the recent Merrimack trail mapping project that NRPC did. She explained that NRPC went under contract with the municipality to provide high-quality maps that showcase four trail networks in Merrimack. She passed handout for the Commission to review.

Sara discussed how the MapGeo application was not designed to be used in the field. She noted that Android phones seem to work reasonably well in the field, whereas, people using Apple products in the field have had some issues.

Several members of the Commission expressed that it would be helpful to be able to use MapGeo in the field.

The Commission thanked Sara for coming in and Sara thanked the Commission for their time. There was more discussion about how to coordinate between NRPC, Planner Simon, and the Commission in regards to GIS projects. Simon briefly spoke to how he should be contact when the goal is to create a finished map, and NRPC should be the contact to fix, add, or subtract from existing datasets.

There was discussion of the minutes from April 27, 2017. Jared made some grammatical edits. John moved to accept the April 27th minutes with Jared's edits. Vic seconds. Wes abstains. Motion passes unanimously.

John discussed the ACC's finances. "The Finance and Asset Manager Report As Of April 30, 2017" is attached.

Daryl moved to de-obligate 1,500 dollars for Lindabury close-mowing. Lee seconds. Motion passes unanimously. DPW will be doing this work for the Commission.

Discussion occurred about whether a motion for 1,200 is needed for an appraisal of lot 6-20-2. Daryl remembered that the appraisal did take place, but the bill has not arrive yet. No further action is taken.

Lindabury Lower Field Cleanup was done by Scott Tiedemann for 3,750. There was some discussion to clarify what work was completed. Lee moved to pay Scott and Wes seconded. Daryl abstained. Vote passes, 5-0.

Rich provides Planning Board update by briefly mentioning Case PZ8500-040317 which was lot line adjustment between 8-51-2 and 8-51-3.

Wes provides update on subcommittee meeting by noting the group has not met since the last ACC meeting. However, they have begun splitting up the writing responsibilities for the Trail Master Plan. Will Ludt added he will write a section as assigned by the subcommittee.

The Commission considered the idea of cohosting a paddle down the Souhegan River with the Amherst Recreation Department. Daryl noted she is willing to be a trip leader. Possibly, the Recreation Department could advertise the event and provide a van.

John discussed how Frank Montesano mentioned to him that he had designs for the Highland Bridge. Lee offered to bring some tools to help the Commission get the materials down to the Highland Bridge site.

Lee discussed the BID process for the invasive species work in Amherst. Peter asked Lee about the economics of this process. Gilman explained that there are different approaches to doing invasive work regarding equipment and number of employees. There was conversation about if paying a group to treat an area or paying a group per hour was a better use of ACC funds. There was more conversation about what areas in Town are in the greatest need of invasive treatment. Several Commission member brought up Caesars Brook. Lee added High Meadow has a great need because it is an environmentally sensitive area. Daryl said Labelle Winery was receptive to contributing to the invasive fight on their land which borders the ACC sledding hill. There was more discussion on invasive management.

Rob asked the public for comment.

Gina Frey provided update of the trash pickup effort. She told the Commission that she had a productive meeting with Town Administrator Jim O'Mara; and will keep the relevant Town boards informed. The proposed First Annual Roadside Trash Pickup Day is tentatively scheduled for next April, 2018. The Commission commended Gina's work.

Will Ludt said the Trail of the Month will be Lindabury Orchard on May 20th at 10am.

Bill Widmer said he attended a LCHIP conferences and has been research funding sources that could be relevant to the ACC.

John remarked that the Canoe/Kayak Port at Route 122 has a new sign.

Vic said the Currier Land has an improved easement. Vic will email the Town Administrator.

Daryl said the ACC is getting a summer intern.

Rob reported that the Amherst Country Club is doing impressive work with invasive management, natural resource and animal species inventories, as well as keeping their bird houses habitable.

John makes a motion to adjourn. Lee seconded. Rob adjourned the meeting.