

Minutes

Kingston Conservation Commission

1/9/2020

Meeting called to order 4:00 pm

Present: Evy Nathan, Melissa Butler, Linda Foss, John Ricker, Ken, Richard Wilson (Select Board ex officio)

Excused absence: Elizabeth Mello, Bob Smith, Ken Twombly, Greg Senko

Guests: Jeff Sluder, Paul Blais

Special Budget Meeting:

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the utilization of the Conservation Fund and Forest Fund, and to determine sources of additional funding for Pollinator Pathways events for 2020 and beyond.

Richard began by stating that the rules for managing both funds are governed by state law, and that purchases from both funds are to be voted on by the Commission.

Forest Fund:

Paul Blais, a former Conservation Commission treasurer, confirmed that all proceeds from past town forest timber harvests did go into the Forest Fund. There are no other sources of funding for this account.

The Forest Fund is to be used only for Town Forest improvement items such as gates, benches and kiosks, invasive plant removal, surveys and trail maintenance.

Conservation Fund:

The only source of funding for the Conservation Fund is the annual departmental budget rollover plus donations.

Donations earmarked for a particular purpose must be used only for that purpose. Evy will provide any donors with thank-you letters, which will detail how the funds are used.

The Commission voted in 2018 to authorize Evy to make purchases of up to \$50.00 per item without member approval, utilizing the Conservation Fund when the item does not fall into a regular line item category. Richard suggested that this be re-voted on annually.

Possible additional Funding Sources:

Evy showed a map from the NH Conservation Fund handbook, of commissions that receive all or part of their town's Land Use Change Tax for investment in conservation properties. The map showed that a large majority of conservation commissions in southern New Hampshire receive at least 10% of these tax proceeds, with a substantial portion receiving 100%.

Marghi noted that some conservation commissions receive funding from other town fees, such as dog licensing fees. This issue needs to be revisited at some time in the future.

Capital Reserve Fund

At this time the capital reserve fund for land acquisition is funded only by annual warrant articles proposed by FOKOS. This year's warrant article is for \$10,000.

Pollinator Pathways Funding:

Marghi stated that Pollinator will be scheduling several events in Kingston in 2020. These events sometimes require fees be paid to speakers, or other expenditures. There is no current provision for this effort in the 2020 budget. Evy decided against the idea of adding a line item in the last moment, as the budget committee has already approved our budget. Richard noted that Pollinator Pathways is an extremely popular program, and suggested that for 2021, the Commission propose a warrant article to add a line item specifically for Pollinator Pathways to the budget. Events scheduled in 2020 will be funded through grants, donations and if approved by members, through the Conservation Fund.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm

Next regular meeting Thursday, February 6, 6:45 pm at the library

Respectfully submitted, Linda Foss, Secretary

Action items:

vote to give Evy permission to spend up to \$50.00 on an item or service without Commission approval.

vote to use Conservation Fund money for Pollinator Pathways events.