

Minutes
Kingston Conservation Commission
5/6/2021

Meeting called to order at 6:50 pm via Zoom

Present: Evy Nathan, Marghi Bean, Linda Foss, Shaw Tilton, Bob Smith, Elizabeth Mello, Greg Senko, Geof Harris, Donald Briggs (Select Board ex officio)

Guests: Walt Roy

Excused Absence: Melissa Butler

Secretary's Report:

Minutes from the 4/8/21 monthly meeting and the 4/14/21 special meeting to discuss payment of the Foreco invoice were both accepted as written. Motion by Elizabeth, seconded by Evy, all in favor.

Treasurer's Report:

Shaw presented the current bank account balances:

Conservation Fund: \$24,091.67

Forest Fund: \$5,232.70

Expenditures:

The CC received a \$161.90 refund for fees paid for a cancelled conference.

Evy submitted receipts totaling \$30.84 directly to the town.

Foreco submitted a new invoice for the Acorn and West Kingston Town Forest management plans showing the amount recently paid and the balance due to be deducted from timber harvest proceeds.

Greg submitted expenses totaling \$49.96 for hardware for bridge repair at Frye and Valley Lane, to be paid from the Supplies budget. Evy made a motion to reimburse the expenses. Seconded by Marghi, all in favor.

Evy made a motion to give Greg the authority to spend up to \$50.00 on Trails Subcommittee supplies without prior CC authorization. Seconded by Chief Briggs, all in favor.

Correspondence:

KLA Newsletter with a synopsis of 2020 water sampling results. The results show a general improvement in water quality over the past several years.

NH Timberland Owners' Association newsletter announcing chainsaw safety training for women.

Card from Amanda Hollenbeck of SELT acknowledging the 13th anniversary of several of Kingston's town forests.

SELT letter notifying the CC that they will be monitoring North Kingston, South Kingston (Valley Lane), West Kingston, Acorn and Dorre Rd. Town Forests, and that this year they will be once again inviting CC members to the monitoring walks. SELT monitored the properties on their own last year due to COVID restrictions.

Planning Board, DES, OEP:

John's Truck & Auto Salvage. New plans to install a concrete pad to collect fluids from salvage vehicles. This project is funded by the MBTE Remediation Bureau of NH DES. No comment on plans; however, Greg presented a photo of home heating oil tanks and some other materials that had been dumped over the berm onto town conservation property. Chief Briggs will contact the owners and ask them to move the tanks back onto their property.

Alternative Sales. New 10,000 sf building. Discussion will be tabled until a full map set is available.

Trails Subcommittee:

Valley Lane: A work session was held on April 17 to evaluate the bridges. Many of the deck boards the bridges are showing signs of decay. There are three bridges in need of immediate repair with boards that are spongy, and in some cases, broken. The structural portions of all bridges are in good condition. The original deck boards had been placed too close together which caused them to hold water. Greg recommended leaving more space between the boards when they are replaced to increase drainage and extend their life.

A section of the Red/Blue trail was re-routed to avoid an extensive wet area, and another, shorter re-route can be done to avoid another wet area. However, there are three additional wet locations that could use bridges in the future. Three new bridges are proposed.

Frye: A work session was held on May 1 to repair the bog bridges. The bridges were too high off the ground, the decking had warped, and the supporting logs were unstable, creating a potential safety hazard. The work was accomplished by altering the existing materials, but it took 15 hours of labor to stabilize the 4 bridges closest to the tire dump. Two of the bridges were moved to line up better with the trail. Another full day of work will be required to repair the remaining bridges. Also, the tire dump information sign has fallen down and has water damage. It will need to be replaced. Greg will contact Jeff Sluder to ask for a new print.

Sargent: Greg and Evy met with Krista Helmboldt of the Nature Conservancy, who indicated that she would grant approval for the parking area pending a detailed drawing and permitting. Greg contacted Eben Lewis of NHDES, who said that no permit was required as the work did not take place in wetlands. Greg consulted with Rich St. Hilaire, who recommended taking up the existing pavement and replacing it with gravel. He also recommended re-using the existing metal

posts and having a crossbar fabricated, as it would be less expensive than purchasing a gate. Rich will provide pricing on the gravel and gate.

Noyes: A new trail was opened and marked on the Noyes property on April 24. This trail will link the Tucker-French Forest with Rockrimmon Road and will avoid crossing private property that is not in conservation easement. There is a wet area on the trail which will require a 16' bog bridge.

Trail maintenance project list and budget: Greg presented a spreadsheet listing potential trail maintenance and development projects. The projects were prioritized and grouped by year. The estimated cost for the 8 projects proposed for 2021 is \$2,954. Greg asked for approval to move forward with the projects.

Discussion of the proposal focused on the following points:

- timely maintenance and repair of existing trails and bridges is necessary to ensure public safety and reduce the Town's liability.
- the Noyes project will connect Tucker-French with other conservation properties, thereby providing increased public access.
- parking for ET's Landing/Sargent is a necessary first step in developing future public access to this area.
- it would be to the CC's advantage to make use of the current group of Trails volunteers who are motivated and able to give time to complete these projects.

Shaw made a motion to approve up to \$2,954 for trail maintenance costs in 2021. Marghi seconded the motion, all in favor. Shaw will contact Barbara Richter for a recommendation on which fund should be used to pay these expenses.

Chief Briggs has a meeting scheduled regarding a potential donation of materials and asked the CC if there were any other people or organizations we could approach for donations. Evy suggested that the TS use the Stewardship Tool Library at Burley Farms to borrow special purpose tools.

Grants: Shaw and Greg attended a workshop for the NH State Parks Recreational Trails Program grant program, which provides over \$800,000 per year in grants for trail development. Grants range from \$10,000 - \$100,000 and require a 20% match of labor, supplies, equipment, or cash. The application package for 2022 funds must be submitted by June 18. The CC is not prepared to meet the deadline for this year, so any funds from this grant program would not be available until 2023 or beyond. Shaw will contact Barbara Richter of NHACC to discuss other grant opportunities. He also pointed out that kiosks and maps could qualify for educational grants.

Acorn/West Kingston Forest Management Plan: A walk with Ron Klemarczyk is scheduled for May 13 at 4pm.

Pollinator Pathways Subcommittee:

- Rockingham Planning Commission is working on creating an online interactive map using the information and photos gathered by PP over the past two years.

- The spring ephemeral wildflower walk on May 1 was attended by 10 people. Kevin Talbot and Evy co-hosted the walk.
- The Rotary Club donated 6 rain barrels to the town, at a value of \$100 each.
- Pollinator Pathways will have an information table at the Kingston Community Library plant sale on May 15.
- Marghi and Elizabeth will hold a pollinator workshop for children at the Kingston Community Library on May 19.

Community Outreach:

Scott Heron and Evy will host a birding walk on Green Road on May 8 at 9am.

The Dandelion Contest is still accepting entries. Judging will take place on May 22.

Evy is hosting a children's bird talk at Kingston Community Library on May 12.

New Business:

DOT "Adopt a Highway". NH DOT emailed Evy to ask if the CC would be willing to "adopt" a section of Route 125. The CC agreed that there are not enough resources at this time to take on another project.

NH Granit update request. NH Granit has requested that the CC provide an updated list of all properties with conservation easements. Evy suggested appointing a temporary special committee to research and provide information.

Old Business:

Manuel property public access. Greg met Steve Walker of OSI on April 22 at the Manuel property. They walked to the proposed car top kayak put in. Mr. Walker indicated that he is in favor of the project and that he or a member of his staff would attend a Select Board meeting to speak in support of it.

State Nursery Plant Purchase. Elizabeth will pick up the plants on May 7.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm

Next meeting Thursday, June 3, 6:45pm

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Foss, Secretary