

Minutes

Kingston Conservation Commission

6/4/2020

Meeting called to order at 6:50 pm

Present: Evy Nathan, Linda Foss, Elizabeth Mello, Greg Senko, Donald Briggs (Select Board ex officio)

Excused absence: Marghi Bean, Ken Twombly, Melissa Butler, Bob Smith

Guests: Walt Roy, Jeff Sluder, Russell Chute (Powwow Pond Council), Ron Klemarczyk (Foreco)

Secretary's Report:

Minutes from the Commission's last meeting on March 5 were accepted as written. Motion by Elizabeth, seconded by Greg, all in favor.

Treasurer's Report:

Evy announced that John Ricker has resigned from the Commission and returned all the materials he had used in that role. Evy will act as interim Treasurer.

Correspondence:

John Ricker resignation letter

SELT letter introducing Amanda Hollenbeck, formerly of the NH Office of Energy and Planning, as their new easement stewardship manager, taking over for Deb Goard.

Tree Farm Newsletter

SELT "Happy Anniversary" letter marking their years as conservation easement stewards for our town forests and other conservation properties.

Telephone call from a resident regarding removal of the beaver dam behind the dog park and removal of trees from town property on Great Pond Road. The illegal tree cutting has already been addressed by both the Highway Department and the Police Department. Although the town was within its rights to remove the dam as well as trap and kill the beavers, the Conservation Commission is committed to protecting wildlife and will work to find a more humane solution to future beaver dam issues. Evy met with Art Wolinsky, a consultant with the New Hampshire Voices for Wildlife. Art inspected the dam site and noted that beavers would certainly continue to block the culvert that was installed to prevent stream water backup. He suggested installing a pipe with its inlet upstream of the dam site. This solution would be maintenance-free for 4-8 years and would cost approximately \$1,500. Evy will explore crowd sourcing to cover the cost in addition to a \$500 grant from Voices for Wildlife. We will revisit this issue when normal meetings resume at the town hall so that Mr. Wolinsky can give his presentation to the BOS and the highway department.

Powwow Pond Council Update:

Russell Chute reported that the herbicide treatment for milfoil in Powwow Pond was applied on May 28 by SOLitude Lake Management. They are hoping that the treatment will prevent milfoil re-growth for three years. If any new growth is detected, divers will report it to NH DES for removal.

Acorn/West Kingston Town Forest Management Plan:

Ron Kelmarczyk of Foreco walked the West Kingston and Acorn Town Forests on May 25 with several members of the Trails Committee and Conservation Commission to gather the information required to develop a proposal for a Forest Management Plan for both town forests.

Mr. Klemarczyk came to report his findings to the Commission, and to describe the process of developing the plans and carrying out a timber harvest. The following points were discussed:

- The plan cost for West Kingston Town Forest is estimated at \$1,600 - \$1,800, and the cost for Acorn Town Forest \$2,600 - \$2,800. Mr. Klemarczyk will create the management plans, mark the trees and put the timber sale out to bid.
- Mr. Klemarczyk will create two maps – one for each town forest – and will submit them to the Conservation Commission for feedback before finalizing the plan.
- The two Town Forests can support a timber harvest that would make enough money to cover the cost of the forest management plan and a parking area.
- A timber yard will be created at the trailhead on Acorn Drive. After the timber harvest is complete the cleared area can be used for parking.
- To reduce trash dumping and other incursions the gate that the Commission purchased last summer should be installed at West Kingston Town Forest.
- The Fire Department will be contacted regarding trail access in the event of a forest fire.
- If possible, a clear cut will be made in Acorn to open up a view of surrounding hills.
- Timber harvest recommendations will include preserving diversity in the town forest to guard against future tree losses due to climate change and disease.
- Appropriate timing of the harvest and sale will be important to ensure that the Town receives the anticipated amount of income from the sale. He did comment that the timber market fluctuates, and perhaps more than usual at this time due to the pandemic.
- There is wooly adelgid present in Acorn Town Forest and some hemlock trees have been affected. Mr. Klemarczyk recommended harvesting some of the mature hemlocks for their wood value before they die. However, he did not recommend removing all of the hemlocks, noting that wooly adelgid is sensitive to cold and could be killed off completely after a week or two of cold winter weather. Also, while adelgid was causing damage it had not yet killed any trees.
- Mr. Klemarczyk noted that there are several vernal pools in the forests and said that an environmental inventory would be helpful in making decisions about which trees to cut.

He will contact Matt Tarr, Wildlife State Specialist at UNH Extension, who will provide an opinion on whether the hemlock trees near the wetlands are necessary as cover for the vernal pools.

- Cutting will be performed away from existing trails to reduce impact on the trails system.
- Since there is currently no market for wood chips the slash will remain in the forest. This will be beneficial as a wildlife habitat and will help promote new tree growth.
- Evy will investigate and decide if the town-owned lots on the south side of Rockrimmon road should be included in the plan.

Evy mentioned that selective cutting of trees may also be needed at Dorre Road Town Forest and will schedule a separate visit to this property.

Evy made a motion to hire Foreco to create Forest Management Plans for Acorn and West Kingston town forests. Elizabeth seconded the motion with all in favor.

Planning Board, DES, OEP:

*Bresnahan Moving & Storage: Three experts provided suggestions to the Planning Board for remediation of the unauthorized clearing of trees and shrubs inside the vernal pool buffer.

County Forester Greg Jordan noted that the buffer was reduced to 30' in some places where it should be been 100'. He recommended that the buffer be allowed to re-vegetate naturally.

Michael Cuomo of RCCD stated that natural re-vegetation would result in the proliferation of invasive plants, recommended that native shrubs be planted in the buffer, and that for best long term results a plan should be developed by an environmental professional.

Michael Seekamp of Seekamp Environmental Consulting suggested placing logs and stumps in the buffer to provide habitat and prevent incursions, and that an environmental specialist should oversee any planting that is done in the buffer.

Both Mr. Cuomo and Mr. Seekamp suggested supervision of the remediation with follow-up one and two years later to confirm adequate survival of the plantings.

* Smallpox Road (Dan Parks): Mr. Parks had requested that the Planning Board reduce the cost of the bond for his proposed trout pond project to \$30,000. The Planning Board denied the request, and the project is on hold.

*266 Route 125: DES sent a letter regarding the terms of the mitigation for destruction of a vernal pool on the proposed warehouse site. The lots to be purchased will be used to expand the Valley Lane Town Forest. Funds will be remitted to SELT and forwarded to the town to complete the purchase.

* Intents to cut: Three intents to cut were forwarded to the Conservation Commission for Smallpox Road, West Shore Park Road and Torrromeo Industries. No comment.

Pollinator Pathways Subcommittee:

Marghi and Elizabeth are planning to organize a scavenger hunt for children during the last week of June for Pollinator Week. Twelve towns are now participating in Pollinator Pathways, and the group is seeking a grant from NH Fish & Game.

Trails Subcommittee:

There was no Trails Subcommittee report as Bob Smith was absent.

FOKOS/SELT Update:

The FOKOS annual yard sale, their only fundraiser, has been cancelled.

According to SELT, during the stay-at home order, the Route 107 entrance to the Tucker & French Family Forest has had more traffic than all other their other properties combined.

CPLA Update:

Sally Soule, Coastal Watershed Supervisor for NH DES will speak at CPLA's Annual Meeting on June 20 to provide an update on the Watershed Management Plan for Country Pond.

Old Business/Action Items:

Projects still to be completed:

- Frye incursion (Gelina): Identify the right of way to the Frye property from Ram's Way.
- Complete pallet clean-up in Frye Forest.
- North Kingston Town Forest illegal deer stand
- Briggs property clean-up
- Cartop boat launch - Elizabeth to contact Murphy heirs regarding right of way

Meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm

Next meeting Thursday, July 9, 6:45pm at the town hall

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Foss, Secretary