

TOWN OF DURHAM
Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 13, 2015
7:00 at the Durham Public Library

Members present: Jon Herzig, Rick Huntley, Bill LaFlamme, Lucy Meigs, Bob Melvin, Josh Miller and Bob Thody

Excused: Carl Dahlman and Bill Ward

Call to Order/Roll Call: Rick Huntley called the meeting to order at 7:09 PM.

Amendments to Agenda/Approval of Agenda: Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Bob Melvin to approve the September agenda as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of September 2015 regular meeting minutes: Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Lucy Meigs to approve the September 2015 regular meeting minutes as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Payment of Bills: Bob Melvin, seconded by Bill LaFlamme to approve payment of \$20 to Pam Huntley for secretarial services, made a motion. Motion passed with one abstention by Rick Huntley.

Public Session: none.

Property Steward Reports/Parcel Status Updates

- Whites Farm – Jack Stahl: no report. Rick Huntley appreciated the fixing of the split rail fence, however, it is unclear who got it done since it was not the Conservation Commission, perhaps it was done by Public Works. Bob Melvin has postponed tree plantings at the Memorial Grove because of the dry weather.
- Pent Road/Parmelee Hill Road/David Road – Melynda Naples: Rick Huntley and Bob Thody did not check out the downed trees on David Road yet. Rick Huntley briefly discussed the policy on downed or cut trees along town roads and right-of-ways and whether the wood can be removed by the public. It is a first come, first serve basis for picking up wood along the roadways, but one cannot drive across a field to get to the wood. Rick Huntley reported that there is barn waste water (grey water) discharge from the barn onto the ground. Rick has agreed to a suggestion by Laura Francis to work through the process to determine the appropriate method of waste water discharge management. If there is cost sharing available it will be worked into the next Conservation Commission budget. Unless Bill Milardo states that it has to be addressed right away, Rick has agreed to work on developing a plan to design a proper barn waste water management system and to include our share of the cost in our next budget.
- Howd Road – Josh Miller: Josh Miller reported most of the knotweed has been mowed. The berms have not been mowed. A work party to post boundary signs has been scheduled for Saturday, October 31, 2015 at 8:30 AM. Members will meet at the parking area.
- Pisgah Mountain and Chalker Brook Valley – Bill LaFlamme & Rick Huntley: Bill LaFlamme reported that there are tree stands up on the woodlots. He also reported a lot of activity still on the mountain bike trail. Rick Huntley reported that Joe Oslander, Madison Land Conservation Trust, has requested a sign on Cream Pot Road to identify the Maria Schmidt Trail and Whitney Pond to direct hikers to those trails. There was consensus that placing a sign on a tree would be okay. Rick is meeting with CFPA tomorrow to discuss producing a map for the kiosk on Cream Pot Road. There was discussion about locking the first gate on Cream Pot Road. There needs to be a communication with the adjacent property owner before it can be locked. Lucy suggested getting rocks moved around the second gate to help deter vehicles. Rick Huntley reported that some of the mountain bikers may be

riding on the blue trail. Lucy reported that at the top of Pisgah Mountain at the Boy Scout campsite there is a bunch of stuff – comforters and sleeping bags.

- Curtis Woodlands – Mark Smolley, Charles Ingold & Sheehan Michael: Rick Huntley read Charles Ingold’s report. Charles visited much of the property on October 4th. There is still quite a bit of damage (downed trees) from the June storm. No ATV activity and signs are still intact. Saw Mill Brook is running again. There were a couple of dirt bikes being ridden in the field and were asked to leave. There was discussion about brush cutting the edge of the field and that it is not worth it because of size of the saplings along the edge. Bob Melvin suggested the Commission could get estimates for clearing the encroachment. Josh Miller suggested a priority would be dealing with the encroachment on the Deerfield Farm fields, particularly the ones on Tri-Mountain Road. Rick Huntley said the list of projects for Public Works to do for the Commission is growing and at some point the Commission will have to prioritize the projects. The “No Motorized Vehicles” sign that is posted is not easily seen from the parking area. Additional signs should be posted.
- Wimler Property – Dick Porter: no report.
- Sawmill Road – Ray Koba: no report.

Old and New Business

Status of Deerfield Farm well issue: The idea of establishing a property management group is a good one from the town’s perspective and the Commission supports the idea as well. The UV system will be installed, but there is a hold on drilling a new well at this time. Bob Melvin suggested pumping the well hard and seeing how long it takes to recover. He will talk to Bill Milardo about the suggestion.

Status/review of proposed open-space regulations revisions: no update.

Status of Review of Plan of C & D: no update

Index of all open areas as mandated by the Connecticut General Statutes, Section 7-131a (b): no update.

Sign for Memorial Tree Grove: Rick Huntley will be marking the location for installation.

Status of ERT Comprehensive Plan Request: Rick Huntley has contacted the River COG to see if they can provide assistance with developing a management plan. He will also contact the Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District for assistance. The coordinator for the ERT has resigned and Rick has not contacted the Council to find out if the Commission’s request for assistance is still a project.

Website Content for Conservation Commission: Jon Herzig suggested adding a mechanism for the public to send comments to the Commission. He also suggested that the meeting day, place and time be added to the main page.

MyTownTrails: no update.

Discussion of Gate Lock for Dunn Hill Road: no update.

Report of Co-Chairmen: Rick Huntley reported on mail received – *Connecticut Wildlife* magazine and an announcement of education opportunities through the Connecticut Land Conservation Council.

Bob Melvin commented that Massachusetts Audubon recommends not mowing grassland before July 15th. Rick Huntley indicated that is the date the Commission has used but recent information suggests that mowing should be after August 15th. Mowing timeframe will be on the next agenda. Bob volunteered to clean out the bluebird boxes at Whites Farm.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Huntley
Recording Secretary