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TOWN OF DURHAM
Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 12, 2016
7:00 at the Durham Public Library

Members present: Carl Dahlman, Jon Herzig, Rick Huntley, Lucy Meigs (7:11 PM), Josh Miller, Bob Melvin (7:18 PM), Bob Thody and Bill Ward

Excused: Bill LaFlamme

Call to Order/Roll Call: Rick Huntley called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Amendments to Agenda/Approval of Agenda: Rick Huntley made an amendment to the agenda as follows: add Bill LaFlamme as property steward for Whites Farm, remove Bill LaFlamme as property steward for Pisgah Mountain and add Lucy Meigs. Carl Dahlman, seconded by Jon Herzig to approve the April agenda as amended, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of March 2016 regular meeting minutes: Bob Thody, seconded by Jon Herzig to approve the March 2016 regular meeting minutes as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed with abstentions by Carl Dahlman and Josh Miller.

Payment of Bills: Josh Miller, seconded by Carl Dahlman to approve payment of \$35 to Pam Huntley for secretarial services, made a motion. Motion passed with one abstention by Rick Huntley.

Rick Huntley, seconded by Bob Thody to move "Review of Mapping of Pisgah/Mica Ledges/Rockland/Braemore Area - Jason Engelhardt" to after the Public Session, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Session: none

Review of Mapping of Pisgah/Mica Ledges/Rockland/Braemore Area - Jason Engelhardt: Jason Engelhardt brought examples of mapping he has done for the areas. Jon Petersen was also present and reported that the mountain bike trail at Pisgah was completed around 8 months ago. There are 40 or so cars parking regularly on the weekends at Dead Hill Road to use the trail. Jason indicated that mountain bike trail users are a good user group. He recommends that it is time to have mapping posted of the Pisgah area. Things to consider include how to get first responders into an area if needed. On his maps, kiosk locations designated with a letter and number (rescue system) are also help centers. There is room for improvement on the map of Pisgah Mountain that he showed – should we consider adding fire roads for instance for the benefit of first responders. Rick Huntley gave an overview of trail relocation work that is in progress. Connecticut Forest and Parks Association (CFPA) are looking to move as much of the Blue Trail that is currently on Old Blue Hills Road and Pisgah Road into the woods. They are hoping to start construction of the relocation in October 2016 if all goes well. Rick also stated that the intent of the Commission is to maintain shared use of the mountain bike trail. Rick stated that the Commission has a couple of small kiosks available and he can request kiosks from CFPA for the Blue Trail. Jason stated that the best way to communicate with users of trails is with mapping. He is offering the Commission the use of his map as a start and is willing to work with them. Rick Huntley and Lucy Meigs volunteered to work with Jason on mapping.

Property Steward Reports/Parcel Status Updates

- Whites Farm – Bill LaFlamme: Rick Huntley received an email update from Bill LaFlamme. There has been additional vehicle damage to the field. The prior damage has been repaired.
- Pent Road/Parmelee Hill Road/David Road – Melynda Naples: Melynda was unable to attend. Rick Huntley read an email update from Melynda. She will be submitting an updated report. Recently a group of Middlesex Community College students were at the farm twice to do some hands on for their class. Melynda is interested in renewing the lease. There was discussion about considering a longer term lease and put out a new request for proposal (RFP).
- Howd Road – Josh Miller: Josh Miller reported that the new gate is installed. Rick Huntley reported that the current hay lease expires December 31, 2016 and he has asked for help from Town Hall in preparing a new RFP.
- Pisgah Mountain and Chalker Brook Valley – Lucy Meigs & Rick Huntley: Lucy Meigs reported she is working with

the Middlesex Land Trust leading field trips. She asked about getting a gate installed at the end of Cream Pot Road. Rick Huntley commented the property that is for sale is the Rodd parcel. The Middlesex Land Trust may be interested in it. Middlesex Land Trust is also interested in the Caso parcel. Discussion ensued about installing a gate at the Cream Pot Road parking area. Rick Huntley indicated that there is a pipe gate at Public Works that has not been installed. Lucy Meigs, seconded by Bob Melvin to request Public Works install the gate at the Cream Pot Road parking area, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- Curtis Woodlands – Charles Ingold & Sheehan Michael: no issues to report. The gate has been installed.
- Wimler Property – Dick Porter: no report.
- Sawmill Road – Ray Koba: Rick Huntley read an emailed report from Ray Koba. There are no issues to report. There is beaver activity on the parcel.

Old and New Business

April 23rd Speaker for Tree Dedication for Ray Kalinowski: Rick Huntley asked if anyone was available. Bob Melvin will check to see if he is available. The dedication is on the Town Green at 10:30 AM.

Mowing Schedule for Whites Farm 2016: Rick Huntley asked for recommendations from Brian Hess, DEEP Wildlife Biologist, about when to mow fields. Rick read his email response that included several links to other resources. In general it is best to wait until late in the season. Rick read the various recommendations from the other resources. Discussion ensued. It is the consensus of the Commission to allow mowing after July 15th.

Status 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): Carl Dahlman stated that the regulations state that you need to have a list of the properties and owners. Carl will start to gather the necessary information and put it into a spreadsheet.

Status of Curtis Woodlands Comprehensive Management Plan: Rick Huntley received an email from the RC&D district. They have a new Executive Director. He has responded asking if they would be able to help with the initial management planning request and has not heard back yet.

Website Content for Conservation Commission: Bill LaFlamme is working on new content for the hunting lottery.

Report of Co-Chairmen: Rick Huntley reported that the 2016-17 Budget was reduced to \$7,400 from \$11,400. Technical Services was reduced to \$500. Both Building Maintenance and Grounds Maintenance were reduced to \$3,000. No funds were allocated for Professional Consultants or Printing. Josh Miller asked if the Commission was planning to finish putting signs up on the Howd Road property. Rick responded that they would once they have a clearer understanding of the property line at one end. Correspondence received included a reminder about the nomination deadline for the Aquarion Environmental Champion Awards and a copy of *Connecticut Wildlife*. Also received was the 60-day Public Notice for the Proposed Replacement and Revision of the Department of the Army Connecticut General Permit. Comments are due by May 8, 2016.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Huntley
Recording Secretary