

WEATHERSFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

May 27, 2021

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Heather Shand, Jeff Pelton, Roy Burton, Ellen Clattenburg, Howard Beach and Ryan Gumbart

Meeting called to order at 7:05 PM and adjourned at 8:10 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES, APRIL 2021 MEETING:

Discussion: Jeff pointed out two changes that needed to be made to the previous meetings minutes. (1) the date needs to be added and (2) preform needs to be changed to perform in the first section under "Town Forest Discussion Items".

Ellen made a motion to approve the minutes with the above amendments.

Howard – 2nd

No discussion

Vote – Unanimous

MAY 15 BEAVER HIKE UPDATE:

The Conservation Commission organized an educational walk on the topic of beaver management. Tyler Brown, VT State Furbearer Specialist, led the walk and discussion at a fenced culvert for beaver exclusion along Yewell Lane behind the Center Meeting House. Approximately 30 people attended and enjoyed getting outside for a walk with neighbors.

BAT HOUSE WORKSHOP/TALK:

The Conservation Commission is planning an educational event on the topic of bat houses/habitat. Roy offered to reach out to State employees and find a speaker for the event. It was suggested that late summer-early fall would be a good time to hold the event but it will depend on the availability of the speaker. Location ideas included inside the Center Meeting House or outside depending on timing and weather. Ellen purchased 6 bat house kits to be used for the event.

Roy made a motion to reimburse Ellen for the cost of kits at \$145.25.

Howard – 2nd

It was discussed whether the chair needed to sign the receipts for reimbursement. Heather signed the receipts.

Vote – Unanimous

It still needs to be determined whether the bat house kits will be given away to early registration, raffled or otherwise; and also whether the building workshop would be held the same day as the talk or separately. Roy offered to build one of the boxes to get a better idea about how difficult it will be and how long it will take.

TOWN FOREST UPDATE:

Ryan met with Stan Spencer from the Ascutney Trails Association (ATA) and walked the area to be developed for mountain biking trails. The Town Forest Trails Sub-committee met prior to the walk and discussed questions that needed to be answered for work to begin. Trails have been flagged and the ATA created a map showing the areas designated to be used for trail construction and the proposed route for Phase 1, the novice loop.

Ryan made a motion to approve Phase 1 of the mountain bike trails project with the condition that all volunteers must sign the Town's release form.

Howard – 2nd

No further discussion.

Vote – Unanimous

Other points that were discussed on the hike included trail signage, a trailhead information board, grants, bridges, Trail Around Mt. Ascutney, ATA's insurance, wetlands, other trails, Rick's Road Agreement and powerline mowing. Stan may be able to mow once this year but the ATA does not have the necessary equipment. A long-term solution will need to be determined.

Ellen followed up on the question of timber sale proceed allocation. It is apparently written in the property's Covenant that half of the timber sale proceeds must be given to the Edgar May Health and Recreation Center. A copy of the Covenant is needed for confirmation.

NEW WCC CHAIR:

Heather expressed interest in stepping out of the role of Chairperson on the commission. Ryan offered to fill the role if there were no other interested members.

Howard made a motion to appoint Ryan as Chairperson of the Conservation Commission.

Roy – 2nd

It was discussed that since Ryan had been Secretary this role would need to be filled.

Vote – Unanimous

Ellen offered to be Secretary for at least the next few meetings but will be away for others.

Heather offered to stand in for Ellen when she could not attend. A vote to fill the role of Secretary was put off until the next meeting so other members could be present.

WCC SPONSORED WORKSHOP/HIKE IDEAS:

-BAT HOUSES:

This topic was discussed in greater detail earlier in the meeting.

-TOWN FOREST HIKE:

This event will be dependent upon the timing of logging that is expected to occur along Rick's Road, the access to the Town Forest. Ryan will reach out to Tim Morton about logging details and Jeff will continue to plan to lead the hike.

OTHER/NEW BUISNESS:

Patricia Nash, a commission member, has not been present at the previous meetings after being appointed. Ryan will contact her to find out if she still has an interest in being a member.

Next WCC Meeting: June 24, 2021, at 7:00 PM, Center Meeting House

Respectfully Submitted,

Ryan Gumbart