

WEATHERSFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Weathersfield Center Meetinghouse

JULY 22, 2021

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

Meeting called to order at 7:10 PM and adjourned at 8:34 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES, JUNE 24, 2021 MEETING: The minutes were approved with one correction, Howard Beach's name was corrected (Leach to Beach).

TOWN FOREST DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Access to the Town Forest: Howard had attended the recent Selectboard meeting and updated the commission on the discussion about the Abbott property. Ryan noted that there is permanent access to the Town Forest on the north side (Rick's Road) although parking is limited. There is more parking further down the road.

Mowing: Stan Spencer would like to get paid for his mowing – 4 hrs @ \$60/hr. Ellen moved, and Howard seconded a motion to reimburse Stan for this work. The motion passed unanimously. Stan Spencer is not interested in continuing to mow. Ryan Gumbart has a name for someone in town who does contract mowing. Jeff Pelton will check with Parks and Rec to see if one mowing a year could be part of their budget. The Conservation Commission will plan to pay for the other mowing. Mowings should happen in late spring and again in August. Ryan will pursue with the Town Office about getting a payment to Stan.

ATA Bike Trail: The new bike trail is coming along. It is all laid out, and the ATA is planning a trail day to complete it. Ryan guessed that it would be another month or two until it is finished. Jeff reminded the commission that our part in this work is to provide a kiosk. The Town Forest subcommittee will meet to work on the details of the kiosk.

Town Forest Hike: Jeff Pelton will consider some August or September dates. Ryan suggested scheduling the hike after the trail is established, the ATA holds their bike event, and the fall mowing has been completed.

BAT TALK UPDATE:

Roy has set a date for the bat talk at 10 am on October 23. Alyssa Bennett, small mammal biologist for Fish & Wildlife will be the speaker. Notes to CC: remember to advertise with Front Porch Forum, Sally Harris's email list, and the weekly school newsletter, put it in the papers 4 weeks ahead of time and be sure to post on the CC website.

HARRY TEMPLE LOOKOUT:

Ellen will contact Tim Morton again about signage.

MEMORIAL GROVE UPDATE:

Ellen summarized concerns that parking on the grass between the trees continues -- not for big events where the parking across the road is used but when individuals stop by. Howard Beach suggested placing rocks between the trees. Ellen will talk to Patti Arrison, Sali Taylor and others about this idea.

NAMING WATERWAYS PETITION:

Jeff Pelton opened discussion on the Waterway Naming Petition that he has been working on to standardize waterway names, locations, and watershed areas at the local, state, and federal levels as requested by the State of Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Springfield Office. After completing the draft of the petition, Jeff had earlier this week submitted it to the WCC for comment, comments which were delivered in this meeting and by email. Following these changes, Jeff will submit it to various town officials for comment -- the Selectboard, the Planning Commission, etc. Ultimately, following regional approval and getting petitions signed for each proposed name, the petition is submitted to GNIS (Geographic Names Information System), a board of the Vermont Department of Libraries (VDL). The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Board on Geographic Names (BGN) is the final repository for the waterways names and Jeff has followed the names rules set by the BGN in this project. At the meeting, commissioners could view maps, source material and Elizabeth Thompson's 1992 report on the Biological Natural Areas of Weathersfield (commissioned by the WCC). Jeff described the process to be followed moving forward and the reasoning behind naming the waterways and he accepted comments.

TOWN PLAN UPDATE:

Howard Beach reported that if the town wants to protect the scenic vistas listed in the Town Plan, exact details of the vista must be included (such as compass settings, distances). Otherwise the state will ignore these if it chooses to put in a solar array. Howard suggested that the Conservation Commission, as the originator of this scenic vista list, work to come up with the specific details.

NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, August 26, 7 pm at the Weathersfield Center Meetinghouse