

**WEATHERSFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES July 23, 2020**

**Attending:** Heather Shand, Jeff Pelton, Roy Burton, Ellen Clattenburg, Cheryl Cox, Howard Beach, Tyler Harwell and Ryan Gumbart

Meeting called to order at 7:07 PM and adjourned at 8:35 PM

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES, JUNE 2020 MEETING:** Minutes were accepted without amendment.

**UPDATE OF TRAIL/LANDMARK IN NAME OF HARRY TEMPLE:** Ethan Phelps and Tim Morton approved a lookout along the Weathersfield Trail, a popular route to the summit of Mt. Ascutney. The site will need a sign made by the State Park. Verbiage for the sign must be drafted by the commission and a name for the lookout must be determined.

**FISH SURVEY VOLUNTEERS:** State Fisheries Biologist Lael Will is seeking volunteers to assist with fish shocking surveys. Volunteers would walk behind the boat and scoop up fishes that float to the surface. Volunteers need to be able to walk up the stream for 300' with a bucket and net. The area to be covered is all of southern Vermont. Anyone interested can contact Lael at 802-777-0827 or lael.will@vermont.gov.

**TOWN FOREST DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**-ABBOT EASEMENT:** Jeff and Ryan staked the changes in angle and flagged the centerline of the Abbot trail easement. The commission is waiting on Rebecca Chalmers, District Wetlands Ecologist, to do a site visit and determine what permitting will need to be done. When all permits have been attained the trail can be mowed.

**-SIGNS/SIGN MAKERS:** Heather has been in contact with Jason Berard, UVLT Stewardship Director, who offered to make a wooden routed sign for the Town Forest. The sign should read "Weathersfield Town Forest" and will be written in green letters on a white background. The sign will be located at the northern boundary where the trail enters the Town Forest. Jeff has been in contact with the shop teacher at Windsor High School whose students may be able to make signs in the future. The commission should begin to compile a list of signs that will be needed in the future.

**-OTHER:** Jeff has secured permission from the Abbots to allow Stan Spencer from the Ascutney Trails Association (ATA) to drive his tractor across their land to access the Town Forest for trail clearing of down trees. He will need a sawyer to assist him with bucking of logs across the trails.

**WCC SPONSORED WORKSHOP/HIKE IDEAS:**

**- GAME OF LOGGING DISCUSSION:** The course costs \$1,250 and can have a maximum of 10 participants. Payment for the course should be covered primarily by the participants. The commission may be able to cover a portion of the cost which would reduce the cost to the participants. It may be possible to split a portion of the cost with another organization to further reduce the cost to the participants. An initial notice should be sent out to determine interest levels within the town. Possible groups that may have

interested individuals include the ATA, Town Departments, Town Forest Working Group, etc. It should be confirmed with Brandon that this level of certification is sufficient for individuals to work with power tools on town land. This event may be best suited for cooler fall weather.

*-TOWN FOREST HIKE:* A hike in the Town Forest should be postponed until the trails are mowed and logs have been cleared.

*-EMERALD ASH BORER:* Holding an indoor event may not be feasible due to Covid-19. Commission members may be able to lead a walk to discuss the effects of EAB. It was suggested that a walk on a quiet road with a high level of ash trees could be an effective way for residents to see and understand the impacts of EAB. This event should be held before leaf off to aid in learning to identify ash trees.

**POSSIBLE BUDGET SPENDING:** Jeff asked Stan Spencer from the ATA for a fuel estimate so the commission could reimburse Sport Trails of the Ascutney Basin (STAB) for last falls trail work. Stan suggested the commission give a donation to the ATA. It is unclear if a donation from the Town is allowable. Jeff will find out from Darlene Kelly, Weathersfield Finance Director, what is the most appropriate way to reimburse the ATA.

**OTHER:** The outhouse within the Town Forest was brought up as a topic for discussion. A decision should be made about the cost/benefit of having the outhouse brought up to a functional state. Jeff has been in contact with an individual who will come out and assess the structure and determine what action will be required to make it functional.

**Next WCC Meeting:** August 27, 2020, at 7:00 PM, Location TBD

Respectfully Submitted,

Ryan Gumbart