

## **Weathersfield Conservation Commission**

**April 28, 2022**

### **Weathersfield Proctor Library and on Zoom**

**Members Present:** Howard Beach, Jeff Pelton, Cheryl Cox, Heather Shand, Ellen Clattenburg

**Members present virtually for part of the meeting:** Tyler Harlow, Ryan Gumbart

**March 24, 2022 minutes:** Cheryl Cox moved, Howard Beach seconded the motion to accept the March minutes as presented; all voted in favor.

#### **Town Forest - Cabin Removal**

Ryan and Jeff met at the Abbott's earlier this month – Jeff had secured permission to park in the driveway and pass through the property to the Town Forest. The cabin in the Town Forest was once the hunting camp of Leonard "Red" Whipple

Their inspection showed:

- A big tree which had fallen is blocking access to the cabin and has squashed the generator shed. This will need to be sawed out of the way first.

Other work preparatory to getting rid of the cabin:

- electrical lines, a small amount of copper pipe for propane fuel, the insulation from ceiling, sink and cupboards around sink all need removing. could run them out with the gator
- metal sheeting on roof is screwed down – will need battery driven drills to remove
- Ryan pushed the outhouse over, no pit, everything at ground level

Logistics for the work days:

- Jeff has already assembled a possible list of volunteers
- This work will be done the last two weekends in May: May 21, 22, 28, 29
- Ryan has volunteered his gator to get tools and people out to the site and bring smaller items (sink, wire, etc) back.
- What about a trailer for the metal roofing sheets?
- Ideally someone should brush hog the path through the Abbott's field to lessen the tick encounters.
- The logs of the cabin are untreated but they are caulked. Once the roof is off, it will come down in pieces once the corners are sawed through. The logs can be rolled away and left.

Question to explore before our next meeting:

- We should get an update on the state of the right of way through the Abbotts.

#### **Budget discussion**

Jeff had prepared a list of potential expenses for the coming year and the commission commented on these items, did some prioritizing and Jeff will update the projected expenses list for our next meeting.

### **ARPA fund projects**

- Jeff added a number of items to the list of our suggestions, including the Springfield Reservoir and ash tree removal. What about an open shelter at the Town Forest?
- Has the town bought the land across the road from the Abbott's for parking? Could we apply to build a boardwalk over wetland in the right of way?

### **Past and upcoming conservation events**

- April 23 Town Forest hike: Cheryl gave a report. There were 7 hikers, they were out for three hours covering a lot of ground. The new Cloudspin trail is a beautiful one, well constructed. They used the State Park entrance.
- Ellen is arranging a mid June walk through plantings of Hank Ainley and Marina Garland
- We should do a summer hike
- We should plan on a talk (with slides) in the fall. What about the weasel family?

### **Weathersfield bylaw update**

Howard explained the zoning map and the process of updating the bylaws. On May 16, the Selectboard will review this, and Howard urged us all to review the letter of intent – what is being done, why it is being done, the justification for it.

### **EAB awareness week May 15-22**

We did not come up with an activity for this week. The Selectboard has put some money in the budget to deal with ash tree removal. Jeff noted that forest landowners should leave the female trees in the woods so they can continue.

### **Other/new business – Center Grove**

The concern – is there a need to be mowing as often and is there a way to lessen the impact of snowplows (including direct knicks to trees, wide sand dispersal across the grass, and wheel ruts in the grass)?

Heather Shand shared the letter sent to Ray Stapleton and Brandon Gulnick on June 3, 2020 about our concerns for the grove and health of the trees and suggestions to improve the grove. Additional discussion in our meeting included creating a pollinator garden (wildflower mix added to the grass), possibly reducing the size of the truck used to plow the Church road, gathering volunteers to rake the sand off the grass and rake out the ruts, plant grass seed, and add a sign along the Center Road saying

“Restricted mowing area” so that passersby will not call the town office to complain about the lack of mowing.

We agreed to draft a short letter, resend our original letter, and request a response to understand the status of the maintenance. The letter will go to Brandon Gulnick, Ray Stapleton and also to Ryan Gumbart as tree warden. We would also like to be assured that people who field calls in the town office understand the restrictions on mowing so that the grass isn't mowed just because a passerby complained. The WCC will see if the Weathersfield Historical Society is interested in this issue as well. Ellen is to check with Sali Taylor, president of the First Congregational Church to see what level of mowing is needed for church events.

At 8:38 pm. Ellen moved for adjournment, Howard seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Meeting notes submitted respectfully by Ellen Clattenburg