

Conservation Commission

February 13th, 2018

7:00pm

Call to Order:

1. Intro

Present at the meeting were Sally Ward, Marie Richey, Todd Piskovitz, Bill Campbell, Virginia Raub, Andrew Koff, Alyson Eberhardt, and Anne Surman. The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chairman Campbell.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Action Items:

3. Donation of 4.85 acres of undeveloped land at Map 22/Lot 10 by Dan and Jennifer Cole. The property is located east of Newfields Road on the Squamscott side of the railroad tracks.

Dan and Jennifer Cole are donating their property, which is bordered on either side by town land. There is a right-of-way off of Newfields Road that allows access to the lands. It had previously been separated by train tracks. With the Cole property, Exeter land along the River is protected from Route 101 up until the town line. The deed will give the land to the town of Exeter through the Conservation Commission and will need approval from the Board of Selectmen. The land is limited to preservation of the natural habitat and increasing public awareness. Some conditions include that there can be public access for non-commercial recreational activities. There can be no disturbance of the land, camping, or structures. Hunting will be allowed unless otherwise posted.

Ms. Murphy said that legal counsel reviewed the draft deed, and recommended title insurance to protect the town's interests. Russ Dean decided that the town could accommodate that.

MOTION: Ms. Raub moved to recommend to the board of selectmen that they accept the donation by the Cole family of 4.85 acres at Map 22, Lot 10. Ms. Eberhardt seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Koff moved to expend up to \$500 from the conservation fund for administrative fees for the property. Ms. Richey seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Murphy also suggested a press release about the property, and the commission thanked the owners of the property for their donation.

4. HB 1104, NHDES Wetland Rule Proposed Revisions

Ms. Murphy said that these revisions need to move through the legislature, and that there are some changes to the wetland review process and other issues. NHACC had expressed some concerns about the reduced review timeframe presented in the bill. NHACC wanted to see if they are interested in submitting their concerns for the Commission, but they can also submit comments later. They wanted to

bring it to the commission's attention. Chairman Campbell asked for clarification about when the official review process begins. Ms. Murphy said that it begins when the town clerk submits it. Chairman Campbell was also concerned it would affect site walks, and that the DES would not be able to give the commission an extension for their timelines.

Ms. Murphy said that there will be meetings in the future allowing for public comment. She pointed out some of the positive changes occurring, such as a new certification program for wetland scientists. The comment period will close in April. Mr. Koff said that he works at DES, and could act as a contact point between them and the Commission.

5. Committee Reports

a. Property Management

Chairman Campbell talked about the possibility of creating new signs for trails, and had a person in mind to do it. He also suggested that the sign at Henderson-Swasey and perhaps the Oaklands be replaced as well. The lumber cost would be about \$12-15 for the trail signs, and the sign at Henderon-Swasey would cost about \$115-125. There is no labor charge.

Selectwoman Surman suggested naming more of the trails so that people don't get confused when they are walking. The trail maintenance budget has \$600 budgeted. There is also additional lumber stored for bridge work on trails if needed. Mr. Koff suggested that the trail subcommittee should bring up the issue at their next meeting, and suggested a more locally sourced wood than red cedar. Ms. Richey said she knows people who may be able to source local wood.

MOTION: Mr. Koff moved to expend up to \$200 from the trail maintenance budget for new signage. Mr. Piskovitz seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Richey suggested using different colors for the names of the trails, because anything more complicated might be confusing. Also, on the maps they are listed as colors.

Chairman Campbell brought up the seedlings that would be planted in empty areas. They need to be ordered soon, and he would like to get them in time to use for PEAs Climate Action day. Ms. Raub suggested using tube stock plants because they have longer roots and are better established. Ms. Richey said she was concerned about whether or not the seedling would be effective and whether it makes sense to spend money on them. Chairman Campbell said that they wanted to plant shrubs to provide food for wildlife and shelter for small animals. The commission had agreed to use a mix of three tree species and one shrub species. They also do not want the seedlings to be overcrowded by invasive species.

b. Outreach

Chairman Campbell said that Bob Kelly had wanted to do a demonstration of the Snow-Dog machine, but the weather has not been ideal. On 2/24/18, there will be the Hullabaloo race and they will check afterwards to make sure the trail is cleaned up. Also, 2/17/18 will not work for the Open Barn event because of the weather. The Moonlight Snowshoe event will be on 3/2/18, and the new director of the YMCA is excited to partner with the commission to help spread the word. David O'Hearn said that he could lead the walk. They are worried there will not be enough snow. Chairman Campbell suggested

using luminaries. Ms. Eberhardt said they should asked the YMCA for volunteers to help set up. They also want the fires to be in open spaces for safety.

6. Approval of Minutes: January 9th Meeting

There was a missing verb, and in one place in the minutes the name “Mcdonnell” was misspelled.

MOTION: Ms. Ward moved to approve the minutes as amended. Ms. Raub seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

7. Other Business:

There was no other business to discuss.

8. Next Meeting: Date Scheduled (3/13/18), Submission Deadline (3/2/18)

The next meeting was schedule for 3/13/18, but Chairman Campbell and Mr. Guindon would not be able to attend. The commission decided to change the next meeting date to 3/6/18.

Work Session:

1. Work Session immediately following the meeting to establish the Commission annual priorities and goals

MOTION: Mr. Piskovitz moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Eberhardt seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.

Respectfully submitted by recording secretary Samantha Cave.