

Draft Minutes

Conservation Commission

4/10/18

Call to Order:

1. Introduction of Members

Present at this meeting were Don Clement, Alyson Eberhardt, Dave Short, Sally Ward, Bill Campbell, Virginia Raub, Andrew Koff, Todd Piskovitz, and Kristin Murphy. The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Chairman Campbell.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment at this meeting.

Action Items:

1. Fall Disc Golf

Josh Ciley, the owner of Fly By Disc Golf, holds both private and public events with temporary courses. He was at the meeting to seek approval from the commission to use Raynes Farm as a course location. The rules of disc golf are similar to golf and involve throwing a disc towards a basket. The game has almost zero impact to the land. There are 18 holes usually, but it can also include a 9-round junior golf course separate from the main one. His events run from May-October. This event would be in October to coincide with the last haying.

Ms. Murphy said that they had gotten together with Greg Bisson from the parks and recreation department to talk about event ideas for Raynes Farm. This was a good option because it would be a temporary setup. It would be a combined conservation commission and parks/rec event, and could be a fundraiser too.

Mr. Ciley said that last year the weekends would attract about 200 people. The course can accommodate about 72 people at one time spread out over the weekends. Ms. Raub asked if people are able to come and go, and how long the course is. Mr. Ciley said that the course is usually about 2 hours per person to complete. They haven't had to limit people in terms of time yet because they do not usually have surges of people. People usually play in groups of 4, but they can range. The standard fee is \$17 in advance, and \$19 at the event. The company also does special events and corporate outings. All publicity and marketing is handled by the company, mostly through social media but also through print.

The company can do a ticket split or flat rate, as far as the benefit for Raynes Farm. Most partners go with the ticket split. The town would also get publicity about the farm, and the events are professionally photographed. The flat rate is generally more common with private land. They can also do a minimum split to protect from low turnout. Mr. Ciley has walked the property to scope out the land and plan the course. The back would be used as well. Mr. Clement asked about parking and the potential for using shuttles. Ms. Murphy said that the parks/rec van could be used but they have only talked about it conceptually. Mr. Ciley said that if it was publicized, people would be able to plan ahead and they could potentially have some parking on site.

Mr. Short asked if they have tee times set during ticket purchase. Mr. Ciley said it has not been an issue yet, but they can do it if needed. Included in the rental price are disc loaners, and every couple of hours there are instructional lessons. Compared to a frisbee, they are made to have different flight paths depending on the shape of disc. The discs are also custom stamped for the first 75 people.

The commission would like to discuss this with the Raynes Committee, who are meeting on the 19th.

MOTION: Mr. Piskovitz moved to recommend the disc golf to the Raynes Stewardship Committee. Ms. Ward seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

2. Committee Reports

a. Property Management

i. Henderson Swasey

Mr. Campbell said that they have an order of seedlings coming and that kids from PEA will help on the 27th to plant them for Climate Action Day. They had to change the order a bit because of availability. There are mostly trees including hazelnut, red pine, dogwood, and birch. It is the “songbird package” and includes smaller shrubs as well. There are about 40 trees to plant and 25 small shrubs. They would like to get wooden stakes, mark them with the name of the plant, and then drive those into the ground to mark where the plants should go. They will also be covered with a cage. The plants will need to be watered after they are planted.

b. Trails

i. Meetings

Mr. Short said that the trails committee identified areas that need maintenance work. On the Southern Green Trail there is a plank bridge that should be rebuilt. There is also a trail near a vernal pool that will need to be corrected to another spot. They are also going to check a beaver dam near Cricket Bridge and will look at getting a “beaver deceiver” installed. Mr. Campbell said that the public is welcome to look at the packet online to see the photos of the maps and the work to be done. There is more work to be done in Henderson-Swasey and the Oaklands.

Mr. Short also said that Mr Campbell talked to somebody at Riverwoods who would like to make signs and would just want the town to pay for the materials. They talked about installing 11 signs. The purpose is to direct people back to where they parked and to have clearer markings at important intersections. The commission recommended using a diamond shape for the number markings instead of rectangular. They had also talked about using lag bolts to secure the signs, so they would be more difficult to vandalize. Ms. Murphy said that including more signs would reduce the need for blazing side trails. They would need to update existing signs and could include QR codes. It also was suggested to include reflectors on the signs to make them easier to see at night.

Mr. Short said he spoke to Mike Cilley about relocating the entrance to trails near his property, because he is concerned about his curbing. They would need a 10-foot bridge to go over a small river. Ms. Murphy said that she is not sure about the required modification of plans through the planning department for that. This would help accessibility and safety, and they can discuss it with Dave Sharples. Mr. Koff also talked about the difficulties for people running during road races in that area. Ms. Murphy said that the traffic patterns will also likely change as the parking lot on Industrial Drive is put in.

c. Outreach

i. Raynes farm

Ms. Murphy said Ms. Richey was interested in leading the Woodcock Walk at Raynes farm, but her schedule filled up. Ms. Raub will be available at the barn with beverages afterwards. They will meet at the parking lot, go to barn for an introduction, then go out to the field. There is a flyer that has been posted on Facebook. It would be a good kid-friendly event. It will be on April 27th, at 7:00PM. Ms. Eberhardt asked if some sort of registration would be appropriate to increase turnout and get contact information for people who are available.

ii. World Fish Migration

NOAA and Fish & Game had these events planned, and they could potentially be sponsored by the commission. There will be two events on the 28th. One is a meeting at Founder's Park for a walking tour of the former dam site (10-11AM). There will also be a casual Q&A session. The second event is the fish ladder tour at the Pickpocket Dam (11:30-12:30PM), where there will be a talk about the function and pros/cons of fish ladder.

iii. Rain Barrel Sale

The Great American Rain Barrel Company now has rain barrels on sale. If you choose Exeter Community Program, you can order by 4/30 and they will be distributed at public works on 5/5 from 9AM-12PM. They are about \$75 for each barrel.

iv. Forest Ridge

Last year, Forest Ridge did an education program about the vernal pools last year, and about what to do when you come across a Blanding's Turtle. This year's event is not limited to Forest Ridge residents. It will be on 5/5 at 2:00PM.

d. CC Representatives

Mr. Campbell talked to Bob Glowacky about his film festival. They are going forward with it and are still in the planning stages. They had talked to the river committee about it too. The potential date would be at the end of May. Donations can be given which could go to the Alewives Festival.

Ms. Raub said that Julie LaBranch talked about the Exeter Water trail at the river meeting. They talked about the watershed grant, and the watershed trail which is an outreach program where they did an interpretive trail of 6 signs which will describe the role of stormwater. Hopefully the trail will be installed by May.

3. Approval of Minutes

On page 2, under outreach, there should be clarification that Julie LaBranch will talk during the river committee meeting. Also, the vernal pool presentation at Forest Ridge will be on May 5th.

MOTION: Ms. Raub moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Piskovitz seconded the motion, and they passed unanimously with Ms. Eberhardt abstaining.

4. Other Business

Ms. Raub brought up the Spring Tree Planting with Peter Waltz, which this year will be on April 28th or 29th at the Lincoln Street School with 5th graders. They need volunteers to help pack the trees in peat moss to hand out to the kids. Ms. Eberhardt said she may be able to help. It was suggested that the seedlings are labeled using stickers.

Ms. Raub also wanted to recognize former conservation commission member Don Briselden, who was recently awarded a leadership award by the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Clement mentioned Greg Bisson's initiative for a recreation advisory board, and that the Selectboard had suggested working with the conservation commission directly and including conservation in the charge. Mr. Piskovitz said that Rose Farm is going to the planning board and will likely come to the conservation commission again. He suggested the commission read the materials available in order to prepare.

Ms. Murphy read a notice from NHACC for membership renewal, which is \$629 for membership dues.

MOTION: Ms. Eberhardt moved to spend \$629 for NHACC membership dues. Mr. Piskovitz seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

There was another notice from SELT requesting to renew membership for \$125. The commission had budgeted \$100 for the membership.

MOTION: Ms. Ward moved to expend \$100 to renew the commission's SELT membership. Mr. Koff seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

They also received copies of Rockingham Conservation Districts reports and their services. Ms. Eberhardt suggested that the commission look at the external review service because other commissions have found it valuable. The board can recommend it to the planning board. They also received a letter from Echo Action about concerns over the Liberty Utilities gasline project. They are looking for the commissions support in joining their concerns. The gasline will go along Route 101 and underneath the river into Stratham and will include a substation.

5. Next Meeting- 5/18/18

MOTION: Mr. Piskovitz moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30PM. Ms. Eberhardt seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.