

MINUTES OF MEETING
CONWAY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
August 13, 2008

A meeting of the Conway Conservation Commission convened at 6:30 p.m. at the Whitaker Homesite in North Conway, NH. Present were: Paul Pinkham, David Weathers, Chuck Broomhall, Carol Lyman, Rob Adair, Dan Lucy and Alternate, Linda Kearney. Also present was observer, Michael Sclafani.

The Chair appointed Ms. Kearney a full voting member.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of 6/11//08 – Motion was made by Mr. Adair, seconded by Mr. Weathers and carried by unanimous vote, that the Minutes of the June 11th meeting be accepted as submitted.

Public Comment: None.

Reports:

3. a & b:

Mr. Pinkham reported that neither Don Johnson nor Jeff Lougee could be present – Mr. Johnson is behind in his work because of the extremely rainy season we have had. Mr. Lougee reports that water bars on Black Cap and elsewhere have been cleaned several times. TNC is busy maintaining trails as best they can; this weekend they will be working on replacement of the most needed trail signs.

c. **Literacy Project:** A.O Lucy and Aimee Janowicz joined the meeting to discuss a Literacy Project which Mr. Lucy explained is an attempt to utilize the trail system in Whitaker Woods. It is a “Story Walk” – a way to encourage youngsters and their families to get outdoors. He presented a proto-type stand/station which would be installed into the ground onto which stories would be affixed in removable laminated sheets and participants would proceed from station to station reading the book as they go. Choice of books (i.e. *Magic Tree House*) would be focused on youngsters ages 3 to 9. The idea is to encourage families to go with their youngsters and read to them. The average book would range from 35 to 37 stations on a 1.5k loop (it could be shortened or lengthened as necessary). The stations would be permanent 2x4s in the ground with the hope that they would stay there year-round. It is a self-guided tour geared toward walking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, biking.

Mr. Lucy said as regards frequency of changes, it would depend on donation support, noting they are not allowed to copy books because of copyright laws, but can tear them up and laminate them, putting in a new story every 2 to 3 weeks. They would contact local recreation centers, preschools, kindergartens and let them know they are there.

Mr. Pinkham said it seems the “germ of a good idea,” a good way to get families out and using our forests. He noted there is an event application - some events require permitting

for use of town lands and some conditions may be attached. Mr. Weathers said he does not think this would require a permit, but there would have to be an agreement of understanding as to who would maintain it, etc. It was Mr. Weathers' opinion that they are being optimistic that the stations would still be visible in the wintertime. He also questioned vandalism, noting if there was vandalism and the stations were broken, they would have to be replaced to alleviate the liability issue.

Ms. Kearney said her concern would be they might not end up being there long enough – vandals might be the biggest concern. Mr. Broomhall pointed out that it would get kids away from TV. Dan Lucy agreed it is a good idea, but agreed that vandalism might be a problem.

Mr. Adair questioned where the stations might be placed, noting there are a variety of loops and suggesting they not go up the hills or choose too difficult a walk. He expressed concern with going across the tracks and on the hill if someone were going fast. He noted that there is a Memorandum of Understanding we have used for trails. Mr. Weathers suggested checking with the Town manager.

A.O. Lucy stated that it is his understanding that he is leaving the meeting with the blessing of the Commission. There was no opposition voiced to that statement.

d. Treasurer's Report: None. It was agreed a report for the 3rd quarter would be submitted at the Sept. meeting.

e. Selectmen's Report: Mr. Weathers reported that at the last Selectmen's meeting they discussed with the Parks Commission the skating rink in Schouler Park and dog activities there. The Board voted to increase the number of containers for disposal bags to assist in keeping the park clean. He noted they discussed policing, noting that in Whitaker Woods dogs are supposed to be under the owners' control or on a leash. Ms. Lyman said when she inquired about this she was told the town goes by the State mandate. Mr. Weathers reported the town has the authority to change that.

Capital Improvements Committee – Mr. Weathers noted that in April it was decided that a CIP Committee should be formed to initiate a plan to manage the physical infrastructure of the town based on the needs of various organizations – a Capital Improvements Plan Committee would be formed to provide recommendations to be submitted to the Selectmen for their consideration in preparing a long range plan. Mr. Weathers stated we have a CIP in place for roads, buildings; the intent of this is to get perspective from all the major players in the town of what they would like to see. Selectmen took action to establish membership of this committee, to include a member of CCC. Mr. Adair volunteered to serve on this committee on behalf of the Commission.

f. Member Roundtable – Rules and Regulations: Ms. Lyman said at the last meeting she said she would look into acceptance of Rules and Regulations for CCC land. The response from the Town Manager was that we need to make an appointment with the Board of Selectmen and send a representative to one of their meetings. Mr. Weathers

suggested Mr. Sires be provided with a copy of the Rules and Regulation to circulate to the Board prior to the meeting. Mr. Pinkham and Ms. Lyman will attend.

Information Boards in Whitaker Woods: Ms. Kearney has discussed this with Cort Hansen who suggested placing boards at seven junctions; however, she questions whether the boards he has suggested are too large. Mr. Hansen has the boards, but is requesting about four 4x8 pressure treated posts and some Plexiglas. He has 11x17” maps to be included on the boards. Mr. Pinkham felt the Commission would need a better idea of the information to be included, that we need to be specific about the size and the content, and suggested inviting Mr. Hansen to meet with the CCC to discuss that. He felt the CCC should be able to afford the Plexiglas and posts. It was agreed Mr. Hansen would be invited to a meeting to discuss this further.

Map on Kearsarge Road: Mr. Broomhall said at the last meeting it had been mentioned that it would be good to have a map on Kearsarge Road – he reported there is one there.

Mr. Broomhall noted that most of the trails on the northern side of the power line were put on hold when the bypass issue was brought up, now that area has been eliminated by the State. Mr. Weathers interjected that it has not been eliminated, the State has not taken that position. Mr. Broomhall noted it is at least out of the ten year plan.

A map was provided showing trails that have not been used for 5 to 6 years. Mr. Broomhall noted a number of the touring people, Milers, bikers, would like to see the trails cleaned up in order to increase the area, and he offered to do this on a volunteer basis at no cost to the town if permission is given.

Mr. Weathers questioned insurance and liability. Mr. Pinkham noted that on the surface the request is O.K. Mr. Lucy said he has no objection to those trails being picked up, but is concerned with the manner in which it is done, wanting to insure that with proper snow cover they could ski through there – he would not support major work there. Mr. Broomhall said he would go in with hand brush cutters. Mr. Weathers said he sees no problem with hand work being done; however, if power tools are needed, without insurance, he would suggest putting it out to bid.

It was agreed Mr. Broomhall has permission to do anything *with hand tools* he deems appropriate. Mr. Weathers suggested getting a cost estimate from Don Johnson this fall; getting a recommendation from Whitaker Trail Committee, and requesting that Mr. Johnson meet with them.

Mr. Adair noted the grass is thick on lower Wellinghurst, also that at Pudding Pond there is a big mudhole near the gate. He asked that consideration be given to getting some landscape fabric and gravel to fix it up. He offered to get the labor if materials could be provided. He will check to see if the town can donate a load of gravel plus landscape fabric – about 20’.

Mr. Adair noted on the coming weekend they will be holding a trail maintenance day – Red Tail Trail and national forest. Carroll County Conservation District is in support of it. They will be going before the Board of Selectmen to get their endorsement of the concept, including doing something along the North/South Road - in some places they need to use railroad corridor. It is an effort to get people exercising and reduce transportation congestion. The goal is to get an independent segregated travel way for people with bikes. They would like the CCC to say “We think it is a good idea.”

Mr. Pinkham introduced Mike Sclafani who was attending as an observer, in that he may be interested in serving on the Commission. Mr. Sclafani wished to know the role of an Alternate. He had sent a resume letter of interest and has discussed it with the Town Manager.

Mr. Sclafani has worked for DES for five years until about two years ago, was a full time legal assistant in the Appeals of Administrative Fines Dept. He also was Appeals Clerk for Water/Air Resources and Wetlands Council, was a police officer and detective in Port St. Lucy, FL, and is presently affiliated with St. Margaret’s Church in Conway.

Mr. Sclafani said regarding the presentation about signs on trails (Literacy Project introduced earlier) he notes it is targeted for preschool and kindergarten age kids and is surprised there was no communication with the groups he talked about. He was advised that A.O. Lucy had approached CCC only two days ago. Mr. Sclafani questioned regulations over stories and how they get selected, who would have that authority. Mr. Pinkham stated the Memorandum of Understanding would address that.

Wetlands Applications - Mr. Weathers noted a field inspection was done on the Dan Bacon project and it appears he has filled a hydric B area. DES is issuing a request that Mr. Bacon respond by letter and provide clarification. The permit was denied in Nov. 2007 and he did the work without benefit of a permit.

Next Meeting – September 10, 2008.

Motion was made by Mr. Weathers, seconded by Ms. Kearney and carried, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail T. Currier, Recording Secretary