

Conway Conservation Commission

Minutes for 8/14/2019 Meeting

ATTENDANCE: Rob Adair, Linda Kearney, Dan Lucy, Nat Lucy, Larry Huemmler, and Forestry Specialist Don Johnson

Approval of Minutes

The approval of minutes for the meeting that took place on June 12 went smoothly. Rob noted a spelling error in the name of Steve Angers (misspelled Andrew). Linda suggested that the changes to the first paragraph be discarded. The minutes were then approved.

Public Comment

No public comments were given or heard at this meeting.

Reports and Other Business

Forestry Update

Don updated the commission on the progress of forestry in many of the major trails.

The Abenaki site was cleaned up around the large building in addition to the cabins. Don noted that some mild invasive species (bittersweet and burning bush in particular) were pruned, and stated that the site was in good condition.

The Common Lands East Conway lot is in good shape. Don explained that the heavy wet snow of the previous year had affected progress. The work done had been anticipated as costing roughly half the cost of the Whitaker Woods trails. The cost ran over by 1095\$, which was then reallocated from other portions of the budget. Don explained that the next steps would be to take the overstory out, and follow up with commercial tree selection. The trees would be ready to harvest in around 20 years.

Much work was done on the Marshall Conservation Area. As of the 8th of July, 9430\$ was spent on the property development. Don explained the sources for the spent money:

- 6000\$ were initially allocated for the property.
- 2000\$ were received in the form of a Northrop Grumman Foundation grant.
- 1430\$ were borrowed from other areas of the budget.

All in all, progress went smoothly for the area. The trail was connected to Lucile's Loop, which in turn connects to Lager's Lane. This achieved the commission's goal of ensuring that the trail wasn't a dead end. Don noted that the area presented some unique challenges, such as a wet, stony soil composition. He noted the bumpy condition of the trail, though he also stated that the soil itself compacted extraordinarily well. As far as the future of the property is concerned, Don recommended that the trail be graded smoother. He also added that around 6000ft of boundary line needs to be repaved.

The Shedwoods property is in good shape. Don explained that the trail had been widened to the left of the vista, a thicket of pines had been cut near the split rail fence, dead trees had been removed, and that the hemlocks had been pruned. He recommended keeping the hemlocks as more of a hedge. Linda noted that the trail itself was relatively unknown, and used primarily by locals.

Don suggested that parking should be added to the Shedwoods property. Rob explained that this would be difficult due to the lack of a DOT curb-cut. Don suggested two or three parallel parking spaces, as (as Rob had noted) the previously the only place to park to use the trail would be at Memorial Hospital, after which the potential parker would need to cross Rt. 16.

The commission discussed the vista itself, which Rob explained had been maintained for at least the 17 years that he has been working with the commission. Discussion of the vista and the Shedwoods property on the whole was tabled at 6:44, at which time Larry entered.

Don briefly mentioned the Whitaker Woods trails, and then explained how the budget surplus had been used to complete projects. This included:

- 1430\$ spent on the Marshall property.
- 720\$ spent on the Pudding Pond property.
- 1500\$ remaining for consulting for the rest of the year.

This leaves \$115 over in surplus. Don expressed confidence about this budget surplus, the ability to reach the forestry goals, and noted that he was actually ahead of schedule when it comes to most of the goals that he had set out to achieve. After a brief discussion of the fiscal year and where the commission is left financially in which parts of the year, Don's portion of the meeting was concluded at 6:48pm. Thereafter, Don left.

Other Business

At this point in the meeting, the exact geography of the work done in the Marshall area was discussed. Rob noted that the trail remained a bit rough, and mentioned plans for a bridge over the wetter and rougher parts. Dan reiterated the stoniness and rootiness of the trail, but lauded its quality. He expressed that the trail itself would be especially pleasant for pedestrians, who would appreciate the stunning scenery and excellent natural lighting around the evening. Rob noted that additional surface-work is needed on the trail, and that handling the wetness of the trail will bring additional challenges.

The Treasury Report

Linda began to explain how the commission manages its money through four separate accounts. The accounts are as follows:

- The Conservation Land Acquisition Account.
This account was established in 1989, and fed by warrant articles. The funds are to be used for land acquisition. This account holds 116,000\$.
- The Conservation Current Use Account
This account was established in 1990, and follows some unique rules. The fund had an initial balance of 100,000\$, and 50% of the current use tax income collected by the town is deposited into the account. However, if the account drops

below the initial balance, 100% of the current use tax income collected by the town is deposited into the account.

- The Land Conservation Heritage and Investment Program (LCHIP)
This account was established in 1988, and is funded primarily through private donations and warrant articles. There is currently 21,000\$ in the account. The funds in this account are to be used for land conservation and preservation as well as historic land preservation.
- The Hubbard Davis Account
This account was established in order to maintain the specific Hubbard Davis property, and was fed exclusively through funds provided with the property as private donation. Currently, this account has just under 15000\$.

Selectmen's Report

David was not in attendance, and no report was given.

Member Roundtable

During the member roundtable, Rob updated the commission on the work being done on the Cranmore connection trail. They had requested the commission send a letter of support, and it was decided to send one unanimously without motion. The plan for the trail is to have one downward bike trail, as well as one upward bike trail which will also be used by pedestrians travelling in both directions.

Rob also noted that REI has donated 20k, and that they seemed friendly. In addition, Rob noted that maintenance had been done on the Red Tail Trail. Linda mentioned that the stone-crushing effort on the Burke Pit property was extensive and impressive.

Linda then motioned to adjourn the committee, Nat seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously at 7:15, concluding the commission's meeting.