

## **Epping Conservation Commission**

12/15/2021

### Attendees

- Sandy Goodspeed
- Ben Bade
- Jeff Leombruno
- Scott Pim
- Liz Wilson
- Dan McCombs

### Absent

- Barbara Willis
- Joe Trombley

### Property Discussions:

Fox Run - Discussed the prior meeting where we discussed signs for packing out trash from Fox Run. Ben indicated he thought he had already hung signs at Fox Run, near the picnic table and near the bridge. Ben mentioned when we had acquired signs previously, we had gotten some extra and should be able to put up new signs if the previous signs had been removed. Scott indicated it would be worth putting one up near the basketball court if possible.

Tilton - Todd sent a report indicating the space in the barn opens up next week to store the bridges, and he's hoping to head over there the morning of Dec 24th to see if/how they can be moved.

Rose Marie Dumas - Scott has not started the survey yet.

### Admin:

Photo Contest - Dan gave an update on status of contest. We received 93 votes spread well among all the finalists, but we ended up with two photos having the same amount of votes. Dan would like to get prints of both the winning photos and questioned if we want to award the \$100 prize to both photos. Discussion around how we'd handle the town report - options might include allowing selectmen to make the final decision, or trying to put both on the town report. Group consensus is to award both as winners, and try to work with selectmen to get both on the back

cover of the town report. Dan made a motion to approve spending a total of \$420 for both the prints, prizes, and some ribbons. Ben seconded. Motion passed.

Ben questioned if we want to adjust the rules for a tiebreak for the future contests immediately. Consensus was that the Conservation Commission would be the tiebreaker, and with 7 members we shouldn't have a tie. Liz will add a line about tiebreaking to the rules and send to the group. Scott questioned if we want to adjust the rules for requiring the photos to be of a location. Discussion ensued, but consensus was to not require a "location" shot.

Group photo - Sandy brought up the need to get the group together for a photo. Looking at possibly Thursday the 30th, possibly at 11am. Another option is Sunday the 26th at 12pm. Sandy wants to do a photo every year. Liz suggested we do it on the same night as a meeting in the summer, when we have daylight. Tentatively planned for our June meeting.

Budget Update - Dan mentioned we had paid a \$400 fee NACC but because it's for our 2022 membership, it doesn't come out of our budget until 2022.

Capital Reserve Fund - Dan brought up the idea of the capital reserve fund. Discussion around how the funds operated and how we could fund it, either through budget surplus or through raising funds through taxation. Consensus is we would like to do a warrant article to create the fund. Jeff suggested we need to talk to Joe about a separate article to put funds in it. Scott made a motion that we put an article forward to establish the capital reserve fund, and a second article to fund it with up to \$2,000. Liz seconded. We would like the intention to be to get budget surplus money, not to raise new money through taxation.

#### Account values

Conservation Escrow	\$3,722.81
Conservation LUCT	\$56,582.75
Conservation Expense	\$1,057.14

Outreach update - Liz gave an update on outreach items at the school. Discussion around possible volunteer from the school to get involved with us as an intern. Ben questioned possible liability around doing projects with us. Liz will reach out to someone at the school to discuss.

NRI maps - Sandy read an update from Todd. Todd reached out to Jen Rowden about updating our map.

Wildlife Corridor - Todd provided an update about a possible trail at Hoar Pond, and given the surrounding area is not as highly ranked as "habitat area" as he had thought, he's not sure a

trail around Hoar Pond makes sense at this point. Ben indicated it might not be possible, given how wet the area is.

Route 125 Improvement Project and Beard Sand Pit - Liz mentioned she hasn't been able to find out if the report was filed, but she'll follow up with the town.

TD Bank grant - Sandy reminded us that Kyla Simpson had asked us to fill out a form for the grant, and Sandy has completed that.

Volunteer List - Todd had mentioned he thought Sandy had a volunteer list, but Sandy doesn't have anything current. Todd is happy to maintain a list going forward and be the contact person for property stewards. Ongoing discussion about some of the volunteers we have currently. Sandy mentioned we should try to get photographs of the volunteers and possibly do some PR about them.

Optional Powers warrant article - Sandy gave a brief history that we had spent \$15,000 on the Clarke Farm property in Newmarket, because the entrance to the property is in Epping. In the past, the Commission had proposed a warrant article to allow the commission to spend money on properties that the town doesn't own. Scott gave some history of activities the town took in the past that might have prompted some of these changes to state laws. Jeff read the wording of the two articles in question. Group discussion followed on the pros and cons of the article. Sandy will check with the state commission to see how many other towns have passed this update to their wording. The Conservation Commission doesn't currently see any upcoming need to spend money on new properties or controlling interests, but all agree this would give us flexibility. Scott made a motion to include the two warrant articles as proposed by the NHACC for placing on the ballot.

Misc:

Scott mentioned he got a letter from Lamprey River Advisory Committee regarding the Governor's Run property behind the new storage building on 125. The initial letter is from Joe Foley and calls out a lot of issues with the proposal and Scott wanted to bring our attention to the issues. Liz asked to ensure that if this ends up coming before the CC that we have plenty of time to review. Discussion ensued about if we need guidelines around review time for certain types of projects, Scott suggested we should be fine with an informal, flexible schedule. Liz would also encourage us to do a site visit as well. Scott indicated the main thing is to hold the line of the buffer impact of the project.

Scott motioned to adjourn at 8:50, Liz seconded, meeting adjourned.