

Hebron Conservation Commission Minutes
May 18, 2016

Members present: Martha Twombly co-chair, Suzanne Smith co-chair, George Andrews, Bruce Barnard, Patrick Moriarity, Curtis Mooney (alt)
Guests: Eleanor Lonske (selectboard member), Phil and Betsy Twombly, Bob Wiesnewski

Martha called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

Meeting began with public listening session about recreational uses of Town Forest. Martha explained the many information sources that the Conservation Commission may utilize when reviewing different options for town forest use. Forest Management Plan (Jon Martin for Foreco 2009), Natural Resource Inventory (commissioned by HCC), Rapid Ecological Assessment (Rick Van de Poll). NH Wildlife Action Plan can also be utilized.

Discussion by guests and members of use of forest. Patrick asked if there had been any data collected about how any people use the forest. Anecdotal reports from members and Bob Wiesnewski reported that he sees people parked there regularly.

Topics discussed at public listening session included:

Picnic tables. There is one picnic table near bridge now. HCC reviewing 2 new ones.

Where should they be placed?

At river overlook with path leading people there.
closer to bridge.

Signage

Should there be signs for no fires.

Signs about dog owners behaving responsibly. control of dogs at all times, pick up poop.

Signs could be part of kiosk at entry in parking lot.

Maps posted.

Ideas discussed:

More Activities in town forest (Phil Twombly) Invite camps?

5k trail race and snowshoe race in winter (George)

Opening gate so that people can drive in. Who would enforce if improper use?

Drawbacks of driving in field - wet weather, no way to regulate who can drive in and when.
OHRVs could be a problem.

Mowing a path because people will follow paths - mow regularly. (Bob)

To open the forest up to people who cannot walk, allowing people to drive in for special occasions. It will cost money. vote at town meeting whether to do that.

Make a handicapped access and path which would work for wheelchair. Better gate.

This is town forest concern about 'events' which will bring in more people. (Curtis)

Behind New Hampton safety building they have an exercise course. fitness stations. (Ellie)

Eagle scout project - Interpretive signs for trees, plants etc. (Suzanne)

Timber harvesting in town forest mentioned by Bruce.

Ellie suggested we write an article for newsletter about this session.

In 2010 there were many working groups which resulted in the 2010 Master Plan update. The recreation group recommended an ad hoc committee to address needs of conservation and recreation together (including the beach). One of the chief proponents of this has moved away and nothing has been done on this.

Bruce suggested Planning Board send out a questionnaire about town forest.

Bob stated that when he asks people why they use town forest, they tell him because it is wild.

Public listening session closed and Conservation Commission members thanked the public who participated.

Curtis requested that Selectboard members present look into hiring Merrill's to do the paths in the Town Forest.

Martha reported that on May 29 volunteers from Berea will be doing community service throughout Hebron. We have 7 groups of 5 or 6, who will be doing trail work in the town forest. We have gathered tools from residents and we are all set. Suzanne, Martha and George will be directing the camp counselors/chaperones. Patrick reported that Berea expects the town to transport kids from camp to town forest and Paradise Point.

Bruce asked about liability insurance which Berea has. Also as per statute, landowners and municipalities are not liable for injuries to volunteers unless landowner has been negligent.

TRAIL: Martha worked with Nate and they have finalized blue trail.

MINUTES: George made a motion to accept minutes. Bruce seconded. All concurred. Patrick abstained.

NO PERMITS to review.

Intent to cut has been filed for the Delaney property. Logger Timberwolf and Forester Brian Comeau are responsible for the logging job on 3A which has created controversy because BMPs were not adhered to and there are concerns about lake water quality due to runoff. Selectboard have not signed Intent to Cut yet. Martha is requesting they hold off on signing. She shared the draft of a letter she wrote because of concerns by foresters, HCC, TOA and others concerning the forester and the wetlands impact. Patrick edited and Selectboard will review before it is sent to DES, DRED (Forest and Lands), Timberland Owners Association, Bob Berti, and the Delaneys.

Activities and Issues:

Bruce discussed the photos he took of the bridge and expressed concerns about moss overgrowth and pain job needed. Patrick stated that bridge passed inspection. Curtis said some maintenance on the non-support wood needs to happen - This was recommended 5 years ago.

Mowing: Curtis wrote a letter to Selectboard recommending that Merrills do the path and Everett mow the entire field at end of season. Curtis will send to Selectboard.

Other business: Eyes on Owls - Recommend postponing until fall because Red Barn and other events.

Sue Morse of Keeping Track will be doing a public talk on cougars in November.

There being no further business to discuss, George made a motion to adjourn. Patrick seconded. All concurred and meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Smith, Acting Secretary