

Hebron Conservation Commission
Minutes 12/2/15
Approved Jan. 27, 2016

Suzanne Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Present: Suzanne, Curtis Mooney, George Andrews, Bruce Barnard.

Guests: Ellie Lonske and Cheryl Esty

Excused: Martha Twombly, Mavis Brittelli

Curtis was elevated to full member. Assignments are highlighted in yellow.

Minutes: George made a minor correction to November minutes. Bruce made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. George seconded. All concurred.

DES Tour of Cockermouth River: Conservation Commission members Bruce, George, Suzanne and Martha participated in the DES tour on October 30. John Fischer (hazard mitigation), Bob Wiesnewski (neighbor), and Boyd Smith (NLRA) attended. DES representatives were Collis Adams (Wetlands Bureau), Gene Forbes (Water Resources) and Shane Cziski (Fluvial Geomorphologist). Paul Hatch, regional rep from NH Homeland Security/Emergency Management also participated.

The tour included the Town Forest as viewed from the Esty bridge, the intersection of Tanner Brook and the Cockermouth and the Braley Rd. bridge area, and North Shore Road and the Grey Rocks area bordering the Cockermouth. DES explained that leaners which are eroding can be cut back leaving the root system. Ones in river blocking navigation, we can use mechanical means as long as not in water. No permit needed. They informed participants that the trees further upstream pose more of a risk for water quality, because the river is narrower and flows more rapidly upstream. As the river meanders towards its mouth at Newfound Lake, it widens and the flow is more gentle.

Trees and Erosion on the Cockermouth: Eleanor Lonske reported that at a recent meeting which was attended by Ellie and John Dunklee, John Fischer reported on the DES tour of the river. The Selectboard understands that removal of leaning trees and trees which have fallen do not require a permit from DES to be removed (as long as no equipment is used in the river). The Selectboard has approved the concept of the town removing some of the at risk trees. Ellie reached out to Jon Martin to ask for his recommendations and Floyd from Top Notch Tree Service will take a look at the problem areas later this week to determine whether his company is interested in the job.

Selectboard has permission from landowners Britelli, Roberti and Alexanders. Ellie stated that during the winter when the river low and the ground frozen, there is less risk of deep scarring of the land near the river. Permission of any abutting landowners would be required for any work.

Bruce questioned the use of public money for a tree removal project which benefits landowners. There was some discussion about whether preventing erosion and opening up the river to be used by boaters is benefiting

landowners or the public. Bruce stated that we should have a public hearing before public funds are used. This was discussed by members.

George stated we should get an estimate for the properties that the town has permission for.

Curtis asked whether there might be Hazard mitigation money. **John Fischer should be asked about this.**

Cheryl Esty thinks that the entire town needs to vote on any town money spent on tree removal. She questions what is public good and reminded members that trees have always fallen into the river.

Curtis made a motion that the Selectboard continue with obtaining estimates removal of problem trees on Audubon, Britelli and Alexander properties.

Bruce seconded. All concurred. Suzanne will be attending Selectboard meeting on Dec. 3 and will inform them of our motion.

Permits: Nyberg property on Groton Road – pond construction approved by DES.

Andy McLane permits – DES - approved. Shoreland impact Permit

Andy McLane permit -- Wetlands and non-site specific permit – approved DES.

George questioned why we get permit information after the approval rather than before approval. This was discussed and Suzanne agreed that we should be more proactive.

NHACC Annual Conference: Suzanne and Mavis attended this. Suzanne gave brief report and will include her notes on the trailbuilding seminar as an addendum to these minutes.

Hebron Town Forest – Trail work: Nate will be here 9 am Sunday and we are looking for volunteers. George stated that he has tried to meet up with Nate previously and hasn't been able to find him in the forest.

Bruce stated that the bridge into the forest is not being maintained by the town. It needs to be painted.

Bruce suggested that conservation commission members take a good look at the bridge and at future meeting we can make a motion to recommend that the bridge be repaired. Bruce volunteered to take photos.

Should the maintenance of the bridge be added to the Capital Improvement Plan? **George is a member of that committee and will bring up the subject after members inspect the bridge.**

Winter activities:

Rick Van de Poll is scheduled to do an evening presentation with potluck on Jan 17. **Martha will consult with church to see if basement is available.**

Newfound Trackers will lead an easy snowshoe trip in late February for the public. **Suzanne and Martha will follow-up on this.**

George spoke with the folks at "Eyes on Owls" -- their fee is \$495 and travel is \$115. They are available in April and May, except for Mother's Day. **George will research when church is available and the owl people availability.**

George suggested that the Conservation Commission sponsor 3 events per year. Suzanne suggested that we co-sponsor an event with Audubon to be held in the Red Barn during the summer.

Bruce suggested inviting the Groton Conservation Commission to join us for projects or a joint meeting.

Bruce discussed that there are folks who are not as mobile who would like to use forest. He spoke about a picnic area. She and Bruce discussed how years ago, the HCC discussed building a picnic area that folks could drive to. This would necessitate opening up the bridge and using boulders to prevent vehicles from driving up the road. Suzanne asked if anyone knew who had set up the picnic table near the river on the parking lot side of the bridge.

Bruce suggested a survey asking residents, "What would you like to see in town forest and what types of activities? Suzanne suggested a survey or article be put into town newsletter and asked Bruce to work on this project. Bruce said that Selectboard need to be brought into this discussion.

Other business: Suzanne shared the HCC Minutes from 1970 when Charles Bean deeded his property to the town.

Hunting at Bean Sanctuary – It does not stipulate "No hunting" in the deed to the Bean Sanctuary. However HCC members agreed that hunting should not be allowed there because of proximity to road and proximity to the water used by boaters. Hunting is allowed in the Town Forest.

Suzanne said that Martha would like to step down as chair of the HCC next year. Members discussed whether it is time to search again for a clerk/secretary which would take some of the responsibility including taking minutes and how to better engage members to make chair's position less time consuming.

There being no further business to discuss, Suzanne made a motion to adjourn and Bruce seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Smith, Acting secretary

Attachment: Report by Suzanne Smith

NHACC Conference 2015 Report from Suzanne Smith November 2015

Getting the Water off the Trail and the Trail out of the Water

Presenter Lew Shelley, Snowhawk, LLC snowhawkllc@gmail.com

(Lew builds kiosks, bridges as well as trails and can organize a team of volunteers too. He is currently building kiosks for Goose Pond property as well as Grey Rocks.)

Trails – Try to maintain 10-15 degrees steepness when building. Klinometer measures steepness. App available for \$2.99!

Rather than switchbacks sloping curves.

Stay on uphill side of large trees because of roots.

When trail building, build high and wide so that intense trail maintenance is needed less frequently.

Dig down past the top organic layer so there is a more stable surface for trail.

Bridges/bog and otherwise

If a bridge is 'bank to bank' and not in water at all, no permit needed from DES. When in doubt contact DES.

Bridges are a liability. If you are having a bridge built, make sure that it is certified/builder is certified. If someone gets hurt, you want to be covered.

Avoid treated lumber especially for the foundation where it interacts with the soil/wetland.

Black locust will last 100 years, but it is very expensive and does not grow this far north.

Hemlock has a rough surface so less slippery.

When building a bridge be sure not to have planks close enough together so small children or dog legs do not go through space.

When building a bridge use GRK screws.

If a stream is almost dry and easily crossable during a few months of the year and only in need of a bridge, in spring or after heavy rain, he recommended using well placed LARGE rocks for traversing stream. Easiest, least expensive, and no liability ie with bridge.

If a bridge is elevated 30 inches above the stream or ground, a railing is required.

If building a bog bridge, remove bark. When putting bog bridge together, notch the underside of the top piece so that water/moisture does not build up in that area. (such as when notch is in top of bottom piece.)

- One thought I had was if we are making long sloping turns and trails built as Nate and Lew recommend, wide and tall, we might consider thinking of back country x-c skiers when improving Cockermouth Ledge trail specifically – or parts of it.
- Really think we need to come up with an alternative to the very steep downhill on Cockermouth Ledge Trail.
- Continue discussion of stream crossings on trail up to Spec Pond.