

LANCASTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION (LCC) MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT
Town Hall Town Hall Second Floor – October 11, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Margaret Hobbs, Sam Mayne, Racheal Stuart, Kim Votta

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kathy-Jean Lavoie, Troy Merner, Nancy Southworth

OTHERS PRESENT: None

Stuart opened the meeting at 5:34. Roll call of members present: Mayne, Votta, Hobbs, Stuart.

APPOINTMENTS and Public hearings: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Stuart introduced minutes for the September 30th regular meeting and nonpublic sessions for August 18th and September 30th.

Votta motioned to approve all three sets of minutes as presented. Hobbs seconded. A vote was taken, and the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

- LCC Clerk
 - Stuart noted the resignation of LCC Clerk Linda Gilmore, noting that she had received useful feedback from Gilmore about requirements of the role. Hobbs also noted the role has taken more time than we originally anticipated.
 - Stuart reported that the Town Manager Ben Gaetjens-Oleson had reached out to explore the possibility of a shared clerk for LCC, the Planning Board and Zoning Board. Members present encouraged Stuart to explore that option.
 - Votta indicated she might know someone who is interested if the LCC decides to continue as is with an LCC-only Clerk.
 - Stuart will move expeditiously with the Town Manager and report back to LCC in advance of the November meeting.

ONGOING/UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Heritage Trail Update
 - Stuart reported that the Selectboard was supportive of the concept of a revitalized committee working with the LCC. The Town Manager wanted to look into the previous structure to make sure there wasn't something new created if it wasn't needed.
 - Maynes reviewed the project plan and answered questions from Commission members about the location of various sections and timing of work.
 - Stuart reported on her discussions with the Northern Forest Center about their grant application to the Davis Foundation, on behalf of the Town, requesting funding for an

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ecological assessment and trail planning for the Town Forest. Some of the funds would be used to coordinate with and support the Heritage Trail volunteers.

- Those present were in favor of the proposal from Maynes and Maynes and agreed to consider a specific structure and vote at the November meeting.
- Stuart will talk with the Town Manager to resolve the structure issues before the November meeting.
- LCC Work Plan Review
 - Prime Wetlands Designation – those present discussed the costs and benefits of moving forward with PWD. More information is needed about the steps that need to be taken, and the potential costs and/or benefits before agreeing to move forward. Votta offered to take the first step of better understanding the process and reporting back the Commission.
 - LCC Role with Potential Wetlands Violations – Stuart noted that monitoring wetlands is core work for conservation commissions. It is unclear how LCC should address possible violations if we have not received any permits from DES. Several members present suggested the LCC should not play an enforcement role but could appropriately respond to complaints from the public. LCC should first take steps with public education on wetlands rules and regulations, and let residents and landowners know this is an area of interest for us. The role of Town staff is not clear. Stuart agreed to discuss with the Town Manager and report back in November.
 - Town Forest – Those present discussed the concept of putting a conservation easement on the Town Forest. While it is protected somewhat because it is owned by the Town, it does not have the permanent protection an easement would provide. Additionally, some sources of funds for future conservation such as the ARM Fund rank projects more favorably if they build a connection to *permanently* protected land. Stuart agreed to send out an easement template that has been used by other Towns for their Town Forests, clarify the process for doing this, and speak with the Town Manager.
 - ARM Fund – Stuart reported she had done some work on the “Case”, including a bold vision. She also noted she had made progress on possible introductions to key landowners. She and Mayne will meet this week to discuss and continue to work on the Conservation option. Additionally, she reported that she and Hobbs had met with the Town Manager about a Plan B (non-conservation) option related to the Indian Brook crossing at Summer Street and the Indian Brook mobile home park flooding. The Town Manager expressed interest in supporting this option and had ideas about what would need to happen if the mobile home park is in private ownership. Stuart will follow up with the Town Manager. Stuart also reported she had met with the Acting President of Cohos Trail Association. Much of their trail network is located in ARM Fund Region 9. CT trail maintenance often requires bog bridges to ensure stream and water flowage is not negatively affected by the trails, so the ARM Fund may be a source of funds for them.

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- Stuart reported that she was considering one-to-one outreach to landowners along the D-142 Line to introduce the LCC, let them know of our work with Eversource, and make sure they know of the opportunities they have during and after Eversource work on their land. Those present were supportive of this concept and suggested more public outreach in general would help the LCC build support for our work, Friends of Weeks State Park, and the Rotary and Lions Clubs were suggestion. A presentation about our workplan should be developed before taking this step.

Reading of communications directed to Commission: None

OTHER BUSINESS

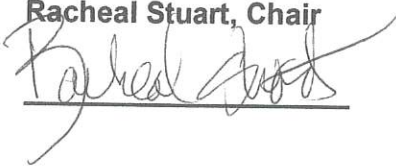
- Nomination Recommendations: None
- Selectboard Report: None
- Treasurer's Report: None

Noting that there was no further business to come before the committee, a motion to adjourn was called for.

Hobbs motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mayne seconded. A vote was taken, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Approved: November 8, 2021

Racheal Stuart, Chair



Kathy-Jean Lavoie, Vice-Chair