

**Lancaster Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes  
Town Hall Second Floor – October 11, 2022**

**Members present:** Nancy Southworth, Racheal Stuart, Kathy-Jean Lavoie, Vickie Gibbs, Sam Mayne, Troy Merner

**Members Absent:** Kim Votta

**Others present:**

Presenters: Elise Lawson of Watershed to Wildlife, Julie Renaud Evans of Northern Forest Center  
Members of the public: Linda Ogle, Lucy Wyman, Melissa Grella, Rob Christie, Kate Hartnett, Heidi Chester

**Initial Business:** Stuart called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Roll call was taken and introductions made. Stuart noted that meeting format would be less formal, in order to encourage flow of dialogue between committee members, the presenters &/or members of the public in attendance. She stated she would moderate the discussion as needed.

**Approval of minutes:**

*Lavoie made a motion to approve the September 12, 2022 minutes as written. Southworth seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

**LCC Workplan Topics:**

**Presentation of Functional Assessment of Wetlands Throughout the Northumberland Tributaries Sub-watershed and Headwater Area of the Otter Brook Subwatershed**

By Elise Lawson of Watershed to Wildlife

Lawson narrated a slide show featuring highlights of her research, which focused on quantifying scores for 3 wetland areas located in Lancaster based on 12 categories of function. The scores are intended to clarify the ranked value of each area. Lawson reviewed each wetland area, citing maps, photos & types of vegetation/wildlife. Questions from attendees were answered: Lawson clarified the points of access she used to conduct her fieldwork on each parcel (for Wyman). She clarified the importance of headwater area as "not any more important than other areas of the watershed" but important for their remote setting (for Stuart). Stuart noted the Conservation Commission's intent to post access to the assessment online (for Christie). Group discussion ensued regarding which town entities (Planning Board, Zoning Board) may be likely to use this functional assessment as basis for implementation of protective measure like waterway setbacks.

**Presentation of Recreational Trails Project**

By Julie Renaud Evans of Northern Forest Center (NFC)

Renaud Evans explained the method by which NFC determines the most ecologically responsible placement for proposed trails, with regard to least disturbance while allowing human access for recreational &/or educational purposes. Using interactive maps, she highlighted proposed trails on Town Forest land as well as a potential path along the Israel River from Main Street downstream. Questions & discussion followed: Renaud Evans outlined the NFC's source(s) of funding as by Federal & private grants as well as individual contribution (for Christie). Gibbs stated that trails development seems in step with Master Planning survey responses from townspeople. Southworth questioned the prudence of more trail development, citing the existing Heritage Trail as unused & unmaintained. Grella raised concerns about parking issues when trail access begins in town. As discussion of trail development pros/cons continued, Stuart read verbatim RSA 36 which outlines the statutory obligation of the Conservation Commission, to clarify that its members are primarily charged with the protection of natural

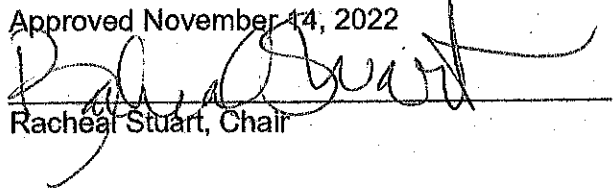
resources and watersheds. Members (& Lawson) acknowledged that encouraging limited access for the sake of education & appreciation may help to reinforce a protective public awareness, while broader access may be harmful to delicate ecology. Stuart thanked both presenters for their contributions.


**Other business:** Stuart opened the floor to other business; none presented.

*Gibbs moved to adjourn; Mayne seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:24pm.*

Respectfully submitted, Heidi Chester/Racheal Stuart

Approved November 14, 2022

  
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Racheal Stuart, Chair

  
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Kim Votta, Vice Chair