

Lancaster Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Lancaster Town Office - May 9, 2022

INITIAL BUSINESS: Stuart called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Racheal Stuart, Kathy-Jean Lavoie, Kim Votta, Nancy Southworth, Sam Mayne

MEMBERS ABSENT: Troy Merner

OTHERS PRESENT: Joel White, member of the public, Barbara Payer, Clerk.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Stuart introduced minutes for April 14, 2022, meeting. There was no discussion. Southworth made motion to approve, and Mayne seconded. *The motion carried by majority vote, with Lavoie abstaining.*

NEW BUSINESS:

Update on partnership with Northern Forest Center (NFC) for Trails and Town Forest Studies (Mayne, Stuart) The NFC has secured the following resources for Town priorities: Grant funding for trails, ecological study for the Town forest, and pro-bono remote sensing mapping of the Town forest.

Mayne has spoken with Julie Renaud-Evans at NFC briefly regarding the Heritage Trail outreach. NFC has funds and people to help with landowner outreach. Votta noted that it is important that local landowners know the LCC is leading this work, and that we build and maintain relationships with them. Stuart agreed to clarify this with Julie.

Stuart mentioned that NFC funding is for trail design, materials and upgrade for Lancaster's Heritage Trail, Community Camp Trails, and River Walk. The NFC can provide other resources, such as project management and administrative leadership, while allowing us to do decision making, community outreach and fun on-the-ground work. Votta added that adequate signage is needed to improve the trail system, along with maps directing people from downtown. Mayne noted that the Northwoods Stewardship Center is a possible contractor for trail work.

Stuart noted that NFC funding is also available to do additional ecological assessment of the town forest. LCC is already moving forward with Elise Lawson on a wetlands assessment for the ARM fund. Stuart has asked Julie to send the RFP for the ecological assessment out to consultants, review the proposals and work together with the Town on which consultant to hire.

Pro-bono remote sensing mapping by Whiteout Solutions was initially proposed for the Town forest as well. As there are so many resources flowing toward the Town forest, Stuart suggested talking with Whiteout about re-allocating this resource toward Knotweed mapping. Lavoie agreed to come to an upcoming meeting to explore this option.

LCC WORKPLAN TOPICS:

ARM Fund Pre-proposal Final LCC approval for submission (Mayne/Stuart) There are no changes since last the last LCC review. Town Manager Ben Gaetjens-Olesen will sign letter of support on behalf of the Town. The pre-proposal is ready to submit at the end of May.

Community Town Forest Harvest Report (Stuart) Greg Ainsworth had to have the logging company remove equipment a bit early as conditions were too wet. As a result, there are three-four acres that were not cut.

He will have the contractors go back in to stabilize the skid road and make sure ruts are smoothed out. The net revenue for 2022 harvest was about \$15,000. Greg is willing to go out and show trail designers and crews where sensitive spots are, good views, etc. when the time comes.

Report on CISMA/Knotweed site walk and next steps (Lavoie) Lavoie discussed the details from the meeting between CISMA and the LCC which took place on April 27, 2022. The river crossing was not possible, so they went to the transfer station to inspect knotweed present at that location. A public meeting, hosted by the LCC, will take place on June 2 to educate the public about knotweed and on the collaboration with CISMA, also to recruit volunteers for mapping.

Mapping training will be provided to the volunteers by CISMA and they will also work with landowners interested in hosting demonstration sites. Lavoie will conduct targeted outreach to Water Street homeowners. Future work will include the river walk location, getting more landowners involved, and possible work by Town road crews. The Town supports the CISMA starting work at the Transfer station, beginning in June.

Joel White added that, if possible, it would be good to have a booth at the Lancaster Fair to provide public education on knotweed. He feels that this is a good opportunity to push awareness and feels that people would be receptive to new information. He is willing to work the fair. CISMA representatives are also interested in a booth at the fair. Lavoie will put together a subcommittee for the knotweed project.

Lavoie made a power point about knotweed last fall Which will be uploaded the LCC Google Drive.

Wetlands assessment Votta discussed the start-up of work with Elise Lawson on the wetlands assessment for the ARM Fund proposal. Lawson and Votta identified six parcels and the LCC sent out a letter last week requesting landowner permission to collect data. Field work is projected to start end of May/ early June once permissions are obtained.

D142 Line Three Week Look Ahead (TWLA) A site visit will take place on Wednesday May 11th as the prep work starts to enter the Town forest and adjacent wetlands this week. Stuart will let people know the specific time once it is confirmed.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Update on potential candidates and next steps Stuart presented a letter of interest in joining the LCC, from Vickie Gibbs. Gibbs is currently a Planning Board member and would provide a valuable link between the Planning Board and LCC. Stuart feels that she will be a great addition and recommended Gibbs highly.

Lavoie made a motion to recommend Vickie Gibbs to the Selectboard, as a new LCC member. Votta seconded. *The motion carried unanimously.*

Treasurers Report-2022 Budget Update

Lavoie reminded the commission members that there are funds budgeted for NRI that we may want to utilize in ARM proposal and/or knotweed management efforts and there's a possibility they could be reallocated. Encumbered 2021 funds will be expended this summer on Lawson's Wetlands Assessment.

Report on Master plan meeting Southworth reported on topics discussed at the Master Plan Committee meeting, including invasive species, cluster housing, and the need for new members on the Board.

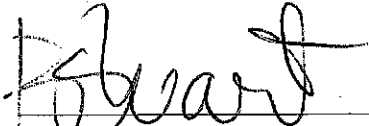
Report on meeting with the Planning Board Stuart met with the Planning Board to introduce them to the Natural Resource Inventory, which was well received. Important feedback and suggestions were discussed moving forward with a shared knowledge of LCC, Planning and Zoning Boards potentially holding a joint meeting annually, or as needed, to discuss the shared mission for development and resources. Good connections were made.

Noting that there was no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Mayne to adjourn the meeting. Lavoie seconded. *The motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Payer

Approved June 13, 2022



Rachael Stuart, Chair of the



Kim Votta, Vice Chair