

## Lancaster Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes Town Hall Second Floor – August 8, 2022

**Members present:** Nancy Southworth, Racheal Stuart, Kathy-Jean Lavoie, Vickie Gibbs, Kim Votta,

**Members Absent:** Sam Mayne, Troy Merner

**Others present:** Heidi Chester, Margy Hobbs - members of the public

**Initial Business:** Stuart called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. Roll call was taken and introductions made.

### **Approval of minutes:**

*Votta made a motion to approve the July 11, 2022 minutes as written. Lavoie seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

### **LCC Workplan Topics:**

#### Report on CISMA/Knotweed Project

Lavoie reported that the transfer station demonstration project was started on Thursday, August 4<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers and UCCISMA cut back the knotweed at the demonstration site and laid mesh over most of the patch. Lavoie reminded Commission members of how the mesh works and that this is a multi-year effort. She reported a high level of interest from observers at the transfer station and shared the handout that was used. She noted that there was a high degree of interest in both mechanical (mesh) and chemical approaches to deterrent. Lavoie and Tim Brown, Highway Department Foreman have conducted a review of knotweed in town rights-of-way and Lavoie and UCCISMA member Jill Kilborn will review these later in the week to assess priorities for professional application of glyphosate to improve roadside line-of-site and prevent further spread. Given the very limited availability of the professional contractor, town rights of way are the priority. Lavoie notified the Commission that she and volunteers will be present at the Lancaster Farmers Market on August 13<sup>th</sup> to disseminate information and answer questions. Lavoie noted that town staff at DPW and the transfer station have been very helpful, and also thanked the volunteer “knotweed Ninjas” Joel White, Margy Hobbs, Linda Gilmore and Lee Foster.

#### ARM Fund Application Update

Stuart referenced the draft proposal that had been circulated in advance of the meeting and noted the good work of Sam Mayne and Elise Lawson in writing the technical sections. She reminded Commissioners of the purpose of the ARM Fund to conserve important wildlife habitat and aquatic resources. She noted the data that has been collected on the site, including the recently completed Functional Wetlands Assessment by Elise Lawson identifies the Town Forest as part of a sensitive and valuable ecological sub-watershed. Stuart also reported that she and Lavoie had just returned from a meeting with the Northern Forest Center at which they reviewed maps showing recently collected LiDAR and remote sensing data. The Northern Forest Center is interested in potentially building one or two additional trails on the Town Forest, something that would not be allowable under the ARM Fund easement restrictions. Stuart reminded commissioners that there are significant existing trails on the property already that allow for recreational access and that these existing trails will be restored and maintained. Commission members discussed the trade-offs between protecting the ecological values of the Town Forest with an easement, and permanently restricting future additional trail development, and raised questions about other options. Several members expressed their desire to protect the ecological values of the area while also the need for continued planning and input before permanently restricting use. *Lavoie made a motion to not move forward with submission of this ARM Fund application in 2022. Votta seconded and a vote was taken. Lavoie, Votta, Gibbs and Stuart voted in favor*

*and Southworth voted against. The motion carried.* Stuart will follow up with partners NH Fish and Game, NH DES/ARM Fund staff, Northern Forest Center and Town management to let them of the LCC decision. She also advised Commission members that she would begin to work on public awareness activities and bring forward a proposal to stabilize the main logging skid road at the Town Forest so that LCC can safely conduct site visits for members of the public.

#### Report on LCIP easement walks with State Conservation Land Stewardship Program

Votta and Southworth reported on the LCIP easement site visit conducted by Jocelyn Duffy of the State Conservation Land Stewardship (SCLS) Program. All LCIP easements were reviewed. Votta described the site visit as more of an audit than an easement walk. Duffy's report on the Smith easement noted "Hunting by Permission" signage on the Smith easement and suggested LCC review the easement terms. Votta shared the relevant restrictions and use language and Commissioners agreed we are comfortable with the signs remaining. Lavoie noted Duffy's report identified the Southworth shed as "having no foundation" and asked what that means. Southworth and Votta explained that because it has no foundation it is not considered a permanent structure. Southworth noted that the SCLS program can make boundary tags available for these easement and Commission members agreed that this would be a good step. The LCC Easement team will see if they can get these tags to begin marking some boundaries during easement monitoring this fall.

#### LCC Workplan Review

Commissioners reviewed progress on the 2022 workplan and made a number of updates and revisions. Stuart will revise the document and circulate it. She will also contact Merner to see if he has an update on the Town Wide Cleanup.

#### D142 Line Three Week Look Ahead

Stuart noted that the "Look Ahead" is only for two weeks, indicating that the work is very near completion. Commission members noted the large number of construction mats stacked up on North Road and Route Two. Stuart will ask Eversource about how long they will be there and where they will go.

#### Treasurers report-2022 budget update

Lavoie presented the budget and noted the LCC has 86% of funds remaining.

Other business: Stuart noted that Elise Lawson had completed her report on the Functional Wetlands Assessment of the Page Hill Wetlands. Stuart will circulate this to Commission members later this week and urged them to read it, particularly as it provides important information related to the Town Forest and any future activities there.

Noting that there was no further business to discuss, *Lavoie made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 pm. Votta seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted, Racheal Stuart

Approved September 12, 2022

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Racheal Stuart, Chair

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Kim Votta, Vice Chair