

LEE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES OF MEETING ON JANUARY 4, 2021

Chair Dawn Genes opened the meeting by reading the following statement:

"As Chair of the Conservation Commission, due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is meeting electronically utilizing the Zoom platform. We previously gave notice to the public of how to access this meeting using Zoom and instructions are provided on the Town of Lee's website at: www.leenh.org/. If anybody has a problem with access, please call 603-234-8194. Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote. Let's start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their presence, also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law."

Present and with no one else present in their respective rooms:

Members: Catherine Fisher (Secretary), Dawn Genes (Chair), Amanda Gourgue (Treasurer), Bill Humm, Dave Shay, Deb Sugerman, Anne Tappan

Alternate Member: Mimi Winder

Select Board Representative: Scott Bugbee

Technical Assistance: Caren Rossi, Planning, Zoning, and Health Administrator

Approval of Minutes of December 2020: After a brief discussion about State requirements for minutes of public meetings, A. Tappan moved to approve D. Gene's amended version of the minutes written by A. Gourgue. D. Shay seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved by Members of the Commission.

D. Sugerman asked whether the personal notes of a meeting's Secretary are subject to disclosure under the Right To Know Law. D. Genes will check with Town Administrator, Julie Glover and make an inquiry to the NH Municipal Assoc.

REPORTS:

Treasurer's Report: A. Gourgue reported that \$1500 was paid to Atlantic Survey, and that the Commission's account balance at present is \$9,068.68 and is comprised of:

LCC Balance: \$6,381.00

David Allen Balance: \$2,686.69

ZBA/Planning Board:

Clay Lane: A. Tappan reported that the public hearing about the proposed use was held on December 10. Wayne Morrill, engineer from Jones & Beach, and Steve Bullek described the project and fielded questions. The site will be used to stockpile various types of soil and dirt from ditch cleaning. Stored materials would then be used elsewhere in town as needed. Two detention swales will be installed. A gravel operation is NOT part of the plan. About a dozen abutters/neighbors attended. All were appreciative of the opportunity to ask questions. Neighbors are expected to attend the site walk.

Demeritt Ave.: A. Tappan reported that the proposed parking area is on the Planning Board agenda for February 10 meeting. She is waiting to see if there will be any new information and will then write a letter outlining the Commission's recommendations.

DPW:

Conservation Easement on 125: A. Tappan reported that S. Bullek was contacted by a trapper regarding a culvert plugged by beaver activity situated in a two acre parcel of land (lot 7-6-3) on Rt. 125 abutting the Sunoco Station. In the course of looking into the area in question, it was discovered that there is a 2.6 acre CE on the lot, which was put under easement in the 1980's. The property abuts the SELT-conserved Langley and Kennard Forest. B. Humm asked that a copy of the paperwork for the easement be sent to the Commission.

Right of Way (ROW) Information: Tappan reported that, in response to an inquiry relative to removing invasive plant species, S. Bullek provided information on permissible activities in the ROW, which is measured either, (a) 30 feet on either side of the center of a road (newer properties), or (b) 25 feet on either side of the center of the road (older properties). In either case, permission should be asked of the property owner before anything is done on the ROW.

OLD BUSINESS:

Moving Conservation Commission Materials to New town Hall Location: Commission materials have been packed up by D. Genes and B. Humm and will be moved to the new town hall location at 249 Calef Hwy on January 5. The Commission's office will be located in Room 7. At a later date D. Genes will refile documents and other materials in the fire-proof file cabinets. There are boxes of materials from Dick Weyrick and Laurel Cox that need to be looked through as well as boxes of newspaper clippings and Commission-related materials.

Little River Park Trail Project: D. Sugerman commended D. Shay for his work with Marc Jacobs in preparing the wetland assessment and permit work for DES. She reported that DES prefers a trail that loops. M. Jacobs has suggested the CC do a site walk with a DES representative. D. Genes reported that on Dec. 29, she, D. Sugerman and C. Fisher did a site visit to see if there was an area where the trail might be continued upstream along the river and looping to the snowmobile trail, but found that the steep slope, wet areas, spoil material and discarded junk made looping the trail unfeasible. Because of concerns regarding the number of fallen and leaning trees in this area, D. Genes and C. Fisher will do another site walk, accompanied by Don Quigley, to get his thoughts on the health of the trees growing in this location. B. Humm asked C. Rossi if the question about the trail's terminating at the river might be something that Dave Price (DES East Region Supervisor) could provide assistance with. C. Rossi will contact him and get his input.

Trails Subcommittee: D. Sugerman reported that she did a write-up that will be posted on the Commission's Facebook page and the Neighbor Lee Facebook page. It will also be posted in the E-Crier which will run for a month. Those interested in participating will email D. Sugerman, and she will send them an application for appointment; as she receives completed applications, she will forward them to Denise Duval. The subcommittee's first meeting is planned for mid-February, and subsequent meetings will be held mid-month.

Ford Wildlife Sanctuary:

Mowing: A. Tappan reported that, due to deep early snow and subsequent heavy rains, no mowing was done this year.

Management Project: A. Tappan reported that she plans to revisit the management project and will keep the Commission informed. Though the initial plan did not meet SELT approval and the Ford CE is, according to SELT, very restrictive, the property could be managed as habitat for New England Cottontail rabbit.

Woodall Property Timber Harvest: D. Genes reported that the harvest was done by a reputable forester who had done very good work.

James Farm Culvert Blockage: D. Genes reported that DES has sent the property owner a letter outlining what needs to be done to restore the filled wetlands and culvert. Work must be done within 30 days in order to be in compliance.

Lee 5 Corners: A. Tappan reported that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service contract with the Town will end in November 2021. She will contact Ted Kendziora to discuss finalizing the project and recommendations for post-contract maintenance.

NEW BUSINESS:

Education/Outreach: C. Fisher reported that it was difficult to evaluate how successful education/outreach activities had been during the past year; due to the pandemic, nearly everything was virtual. As no nature walks were possible, a self-guided walk in the Town Forest was set up, with weekly updates posted on the CC Facebook page. From June-November, the self-guided walk was replaced by three weekly nature articles: a topical nature piece, an article on a particular bird

species and an article about things to do outside. The latter two articles were also published in the E-Crier. She reported that it was impossible to tell how many people were actually reading the articles and wondered whether the amount of time it took to produce them was well-spent. She reported that she had learned that the articles were forwarded to people who were not on social media and that as a result of the articles she had been asked to lead a socially-distanced nature walk in the Town Forest for 15-18 members of Newmarket's Sunrise Club. This walk was a success and made her realize that socially distanced walks are possible. She reported that she intends to resume writing articles, but at a much reduced rate. A. Gourgue suggested that she make videos to be posted on the Facebook page, and C. Fisher agreed to do so.

Amanda Gourgue reported that the number of people visiting the Commission's Facebook page has greatly increased over the past year, with 420 people following the page. While numbers of people reached increased throughout the year, December proved to be a banner month, as a Christmas tree-toting beaver photograph went viral with 84,694 people reached! C. Fisher stated that A. Gourgue's work makes the CC's Facebook page a welcoming lively place with postings updated daily and queries to the page answered promptly.

Calendar of 2021 Events and Activities:

Monitoring Schedule: A. Gourgue has prepared the proposed easement monitoring schedule for 2021

Invasive Species Control: Calendar will show when and where we plan to treat invasive species.

A. Tappan suggested that the Commission put together a comprehensive plan, so that it and the DPW can work together. She will put together a chart showing when and where invasive species will be treated.

Surveys/boundary clarification: Make a list of areas that need work and when this might be done.

Possible CE Violation: S. Bugbee reported that the Select Board will take up the Stevens Easement issue on January 11.

Next Meeting: Monday, February 1, 2021

Submitted by _____

Catherine Fisher