

Lee Conservation Commission Minutes of March 1, 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

Guest: Daren Keller

Approval of Minutes of February 1, 2021: D. Shay moved to accept the minutes as written, and D. Sugerman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously approved by members of the Commission.

REPORTS:

Treasurer's Report: A. Gourgue reported that, as there were no transactions in February, the Commission's account balance remains at \$9,068.68 and is comprised of:

LCC Balance: \$6,381.00

David Allen Balance: \$2,682.58

D. Genes reported that the Commission had received an invoice from Chuck Cox in the amount of 270.00. A. Tappan informed the commission that this invoice was for mowing at Joe Ford Wildlife Sanctuary in 2019. A. Tappan moved to approve payment to C. Cox in the amount of \$270.00, and C. Fisher seconded. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved by members of the Commission.

2021 Easement Monitoring Schedule: All members approved of the schedule put together by A. Gourgue. B. Humm reminded members that the Short property was purchased in the past year, and that it has been the Commission's policy, when an easement property changes ownership, to meet with the new owners and go over the easement with them. A note about meeting with the new owners will be added to their thank you/save-the-monitoring-date card that C. Fisher will send out this month.

Education/Outreach:

Social Media: A. Gourgue reported that February numbers on the Commission's Facebook page were as follows: People Reached 2,196 (-34%); Post Engagements 402 (-46%); Page Likes 7 (-68%). She noted that, though the numbers are down from January, they are very good, based on the page's history. She reminded members that commenting on and sharing posts and encouraging others to join the page will help boost the page.

Frog Walks: C. Fisher reported that she's planning to host frog walks (evening and morning), once the critters are up and singing.

Board Reports:

ZBA: A. Tappan reported that the letter to the Board with the Commission's recommendation regarding the Eversource special exception request will be sent to C. Rossi.

Planning Board:

Demeritt Ave: A. Tappan reported that the proposed parking lot relocation and expansion will come before the Board on March 10 and that the letter to the Board outlining the Commission's concerns and recommendations will be sent to C. Rossi.

Clay Lane: To address concerns regarding possible contamination due to runoff from storage piles, the PB hearing has been continued to April 28. Normandeau Associates have been hired to study the site and evaluate the storage area to be sure it meets with regulations.

Select Board:

Little River Park (LRP), Proposed Dog Event: A. Tappan reported that a proposed dog Easter egg hunt, to be held at Little River Park on April 3, 2021 and subsequently as an annual event held on the Saturday before Easter, came before the BOS on February 22. Before any decision can be made on this proposed event, the BOS must determine if Town policy allows holding a for-profit activity on Town land. Things to consider: unfound eggs, disturbing woodcock, wet areas along the River Trail.

Chestnut Way Open Space: In a discussion involving members of the Commission and D. Keller regarding trails in the Chestnut Way open space (owned by the developer and managed by the Chestnut Way Homeowners Assoc.), A. Tappan and D. Genes noted that the Commission is only involved with Town-owned conserved land. D. Keller expressed concerns regarding a purported plan to expand the Chestnut Way trails and connect them to trails on Town-owned conserved land. D. Sugerman stated that the Trails Committee works solely on trails on Town-owned Lands and that she will stress this at their next meeting. C. Rossi stated that there was no way to connect the trails in the Chestnut Way open space with trails on Town-owned land.

OLD BUSINESS:

Trail Project, LRP:

Approval of Minutes of Trail Site Walk on February 8, 2021: C. Fisher moved to approve the minutes as written, and D. Shay seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously approved by members of the Commission.

Kiosk Panel: C. Fisher reported that, at a Zoom meeting, she and D. Sugerman met with the designer, Cathy Arakelian and discussed panel specifics and costs. To view and discuss the panel, the three met at LRP on February 20. The Commission will supply panel content (text; trail map; photographs; map of Little River watershed; logos of Town of Lee, and Lamprey River Advisory Committee (LRAC)). C. Arakelian suggested having some nature photographs as space-fillers, and resident Andrea LeBlanc is looking through her photographs for suitable candidates; if her photographs are used C. Fisher suggested that A. LeBlanc be credited on the panel. C. Fisher suggested that the Commission's logo be included on the panel; and A. Gourgue offered to supply a high-resolution image to forward to C. Arakelian. C. Arakelian will supply a map of the Lamprey River watershed and create the panel layout. Her fee will be \$500-\$750. Printing costs are separate and she will act as vendor liaison including quotes and proofing. Once C. Arakelian receives the draft panel, it will take 5½-6 weeks (including drafts, reviews, and printing) for the panel to be completed.

Proposed Bridges: C. Fisher reported that DES wetland permitting specialist, Stefanie Gialongo, has emailed her finding that the project qualifies as a Trail or Pathway Project. Because the floodplain is adjacent to a Tier 3 stream, thus qualifying as a priority resource area (PRA), the project has been elevated to major impact classification, requiring: 1) a wetland functional assessment (already listed as part of Marc Jacob's budget), and 2) compensatory mitigation for the second bridge and the bench which both present permanent impacts to the PRA. Mitigation may be in the form of vegetative buffer enhancement within the watershed or, if on-site mitigation isn't possible, the Aquatic Resource Mitigation fund (in-lieu fee program) may be considered. C. Fisher reported that she, D. Shay and D. Sugerman attended a Zoom meeting with M. Jacobs on March 1 to discuss mitigation options. She reported that M. Jacobs explained that if a vegetative buffer enhancement is the option chosen, plantings must be monitored for five years and annual status reports submitted to DES; he suggested that plantings in the early successional habitat may suffice. C. Fisher suggested that another option

might be removing the Japanese barberry bushes growing beside the river near the trail's terminus and replacing them with fruiting native shrubs. Regarding M. Jacob's budget, C. Fisher reported that he has put in 11¾ hours, mostly in site visits, phone calls and meetings; he estimates there are 26½ remaining on his \$3750.00 quote.

Financial Status: C. Fisher reported that of the \$8,125.00 grant money received from LRAC, \$2,064.00 has been spent, leaving a balance of \$6060.00. Remaining costs, including M. Jacobs' fee, wetlands permit fee, kiosk panel design fee, panel printing fee, bridge materials, and possibly an in-lieu mitigation fee, will be in the vicinity of \$5910.00.

Trails Subcommittee: D. Sugerman reported that at the Committee's first meeting concerned trail maintenance goals, with the focus on accessibility, safety and enjoyment. The group discussed naming the trails, rather than referring them by colors. A. Gourgue suggested making trail-naming a public endeavor by using the Commission's Facebook page to encourage Lee residents to suggest possible names.

Maud Jones Memorial Forest (MJMF): The team working on this trail system had a Zoom meeting with Don Quigley and, though the MJMF trail doesn't need a lot of work, they came up with several projects: re-blazing the main trail, redesigning the kiosk, putting new information on the kiosk, informational signs along the trails, pruning, and maps. She reported a rogue trail has been discovered on the forest's northeastern boundary. She reported that there is presently no bridge across the stream. D. Quigley has suggested the possibility of, sometime in the future, creating a new trail in the northwest portion of the property and also improving the old parking area.

LRP: A. Tappan reported that there is a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Recreation Committee which puts them in charge of all the trails in the park. D. Sugerman reported that she had emailed Larry Kindberg to apprise him of the work being done on the river trail. C. Rossi, who is a member of the Recreation Committee, will raise this at their next meeting. A. Tappan suggested the possibility of revisiting and/or updating the MOU. D. Sugerman reported that the group working on LRP trails has a list of projects including: removing old blazes, blazing all trails, pruning, signs, and erosion control mapping. A. Tappan noted that the erosion from the ridge trail to the sandy bowl in the Mills section of the park continues to be a problem, particularly as it concerns liability. The group's long range plans include a kiosk for side of the park where the ridge trail is located.

Town Forest (TF): The team associated with the TF feels the current configuration of the trails is redundant, confusing, and detrimental to hikers. They have created four options for configuring the trails, but will wait until spring when they can walk the trails before making recommendations. Proposed projects include: re-blazing, eliminating double-blazed trails, making access points more visible, improving parking, building kiosks, and maps. D. Sugerman feels the TF team would be capable of taking over work on replacing the bog platform. It was suggested that, as Randy Stevens had given a great deal of help during the planning stage of this platform project, he should be contacted to see if he remains interested and/or available as the project moves forward. D. Sugerman will compose a letter to him.

D. Sugerman reported that she attended a workshop on put on by the NH Bureau of Trails regarding grants for trail head facilities. She will check to see if grants cover kiosks.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Workshop: A. Tappan reported that people have been registering for the workshop. She encouraged all interested Commission members to attend and also suggested encouraging members of the Trails Committee to take part. A. Gourgue will post the workshop on the Commission's Facebook page.

NEW BUSINESS:

LRAC/Wadleigh Falls Canoe Launch Improvements: D. Genes reported that she had received an email from Suzanne Petersen regarding LRAC's recreation workgroup's ideas on improving the canoe launch access so as to minimize erosion and to make it more user-friendly. A rail/slide is one proposed solution. A site visit with the group will be arranged. S. Bugbee stated that, as the canoe

launch is Town-owned, any changes and improvements will need to be presented to the BOS and receive its approval.

2021 Budget Planning: D. Genes reminded the Commission that they should submit lists of anticipated expenditures for the fiscal year, including information as to when these expenditures are likely to be incurred.

Invasive Species Academy: M. Winder and A. Tappan informed the Commission that they had each been accepted into the UNH Cooperative Extension's Invasive Species Academy - a program which runs for five weeks in March and April and instructs participants on identification, treatment and educating others about invasive plants. Each participant will contribute 20 hours towards instructing others. As a sidebar to the educational aspect of the program, S. Bugbee asked if middle school students continue to take part in invasive plant removal as part of their springtime "Servicepalooza" - a day of school-wide community service. C. Fisher stated that, in recent years, teachers supervising the program had not contacted the Commission.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 6, 2021

Submitted by _____
Catherine Fisher