

Lee Conservation Commission Minutes of July 6, 2021

Present Members: Catherine Fisher (Secretary), Dawn Genes (Chair), Dave Shay, Deb Sugerman, Anne Tappan

Alternate Member: Mimi Winder

Select Board Representative: Scott Bugbee

Guest: Caren Rossi, Planning, Zoning, and Health Administrator

Approval of Minutes of June 7, 2021: D. Sugerman moved to accept the minutes as written, and D. Shay seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by the Lee Conservation Commission (LCC).

REPORTS:

Treasurer's Report: In an email sent to LCC members, Treasurer, Amanda Gourgue, reported that there had been no transactions in June. The LCC's account balance remains at \$9,328.68 and is comprised of:

David Allan Fund Account Balance: \$2,686.69

Lee Conservation Commission Account Balance: \$6,641.99

Easement Monitoring: Properties monitored in June: Hutton (6/2), McLean and Quigley (6/9), Talley (6/16), Stevens and Stevens (6/23), Fogg (6/30). Nothing of concern was noted on any of these properties. Monitoring visits scheduled for July: Henry (7/8), Cox (7/14), James Farm (7/21), Woodall/Claridge (7/28)

Education/Outreach:

LCC Facebook Page: In an email sent to LCC members, A. Gourgue reported the following figures (June 7 - July 4):

People reached 2,019 (down 29%)

Post Engagements 1,497 (up 206%)

Page Likes 12 (up 550%)

Monitoring Articles: C. Fisher reported that, to educate residents and perhaps get people interested in participating in easement monitoring, every week she has been writing a short article about that week's monitoring visit. Each article tells a bit about the property and focuses on an animal, plant, or other point of interest encountered during the visit. These have appeared in the E-Crier, and A. Gourgue has been posting them on the LCC and NeighborLee Facebook pages.

Board Reports:

Zoning Board (ZBA): A. Tappan reported on the following:

Eversource: The special exception request needed to replace utility poles and make line improvements was approved by the ZBA.

Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF): The special exception request to replace a bridge was approved by the ZBA. C. Rossi will send a copy of the permit to the LCC. A. Tappan reported that ZBA members John Hutton and Peter Hoyt made the suggestion that wear plates be installed on the bridge to cut down on wear and tear; an added benefit is that when eventually the bridge needs to be upgraded, DES approval won't be required as repairs will be limited to simply adding another layer of wood.

OLD BUSINESS:

Conservation Projects Underway:

Maud Jones Memorial Forest (MJMF) Driveway and Parking: C. Rossi reported that the Department of Public Works (DPW) will do the work; LCC just needs to inform them of how many spaces are needed; the work will likely require some tree-cutting. D. Genes suggests that four or five should be sufficient. D. Genes also suggests that abutters be kept in the loop. D. Sugerman asks about the cost of the work involved; C. Rossi will check with Public Works Director, Steve Bullek, and as for an estimate. A. Tappan suggests that SPNHF be informed.

Town Forest Complex (TFC) Maps: C. Rossi reported that she has not heard from Adam Fogg (Atlantic Survey Co. LCC); she suggests that the LCC put out for a request for proposal (RFP). She will contact Pete Landis (Landis Surveying LCC) and has some other possible surveyors she will contact. A. Tappan asks what the maps will be used for, suggesting that SPNHF may have digitized maps. D. Genes states that currently there are individual maps, done to different scales, of the properties that comprise the TFC. A map showing the entire TFC will give a clearer view of where each section is in relation to each other, giving a better understanding of the property. She will check with SPNHF about what they have for maps of this property.

Lee Trails Committee (LTC): D. Sugerman reported on the following developments and activities:

(MJMF): Very attractive tree identification signs have been obtained and will be put in place along the trails.

Little River Park (LRP): “Leaving/Entering” signs have been acquired and will be put up once posts are in hand. D. Sugerman will inform Select Board member Carey Brown as he has had to address abutter concerns.

(TFC):

- **Bog Platform:** The new platform was installed on July 17, a joint effort with Randy Stevens, the Department of Public Works (DPW), and LTC members. R. Stevens has requested permission to cut all the metal poles to the same length (@ 23 inches). LCC members approved of this. D. Sugerman has invoices for the deck (\$3,801.62), galvanized pipe (\$522.00), and D. Shay moved to approve payments in the amounts of \$3,801.62 (deck) and \$522.00 (galvanized pipe), and C. Fisher seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by the LCC.
- **June 19 Work Day:** D. Superman and six LTC members and twelve volunteers re-blazed the trails yellow, white and orange.
- **Bridge Replacement Planning:** D. Sugerman and LTC members met with construction manager Frank Eitler who looked at all the bridges and assessed what needs to be done in terms of materials. Bridges were rated in terms of need. Three bridges in worst repair will be replaced first, and depending on what is required from DES, work will begin in late July/August. C. Fisher asked if the bridge on the trail to Wheelwright which is in poor shape, is among the first three slated for repairs. D. Sugerman stated that the LTC isn't including that bridge in their work plans at this time. She asked if DES needs to be contacted before replacing bridges; it was suggested that she contact DES Wetlands Regional Permitting Specialist, Stephanie Giallongo. D. Sugerman reported that she emailed Matt Scacia from SPNHF to ask for information about their experience with DES when replacing the bridge at Powder Major's Forest.

Recreational Trails Program Grant: D. Sugerman reported that she has submitted the grant application; she will hear the decision in the fall. She moved that, if the grant is awarded, the LCC pay \$495.00 for delivery of the kiosks; D. Shay seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by the LCC.

LCC Website: Using the Durham Conservation Commission's website as a model, the LTC would like to revise the LCC website to include a trails section. QR code information will be added to the MJMF, LRP, and TFC sites. S. Bugbee states that an outline of the proposed changes should be sent to Town Secretary, Denise Duval with a copy sent to Town Administrator, Julie Glover.

Spending Report:

- April 6, 2021 - \$250.00 authorized for supplies
- May 4, 2021 - \$300.00 authorized for blazing supplies. The LTC decided to paint, rather than purchase, blazes. Currently, \$542.32 has been spent of the \$550.00 authorized.
- May 4, 2021 - \$100.00 authorized for Town Land signs. The four signs cost \$100.00. \$100.00 was credited to the Town's account, and D. Sugerman requested that the credit be used to purchase trail signs.
- May 4, 2021 - \$200.00 authorized for TFC bridge repair. As yet, nothing has been spent. Based on F. Eitler's information, it will cost \$1242.00 to replace two bridges.
- Maps of trails in three areas: Jackson Rand quoted a price of \$2000.00 to make maps of MJMF, LRP, and TFC trails. SRPC would charge 2000 for three maps. It would be cheaper if the LTC does the actual mapping. \$2000.00 needed to obtain maps of the trails in the three areas. As there are not sufficient funds to pay for both a TFC map and bridges, the LCC agreed that, as the bridges pose a public safety concern, these should have priority. D. Sugerman will discuss with the TFC on July 7. She will also look into grant possibilities and, to that end, will contact Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC), SPNHF, and Southeast Land Trust (SELT). M. Winder suggests that fund raising/business donations may also be worth pursuing; S. Bugbee notes that donations must be approved by the BOS before they can be accepted. D. Sugerman suggested that \$1300.00 will be needed to construct two bridges in TFC. S. Bugbee suggested that D. Sugerman ask A. Gourgue to create a spreadsheet to show expenses that donations must be approved by the BOS before they can be accepted. S. Bugbee suggested that D. Sugerman ask A. Gourgue to create a spreadsheet to show expenses.

LRP Trail Project: C. Fisher reported that the habitat map for the kiosk panel is nearly finished. As there was no map of the Little River available anywhere, she drew one. The panel with maps of the Little River, Lamprey River watershed, habitat map, and information about the trail will be handed off to the panel designer, Cathy Arakelian in the next two weeks. She reported that Marc Jacobs had raised the concern that, because LRP is located in an area that is potential habitat for the dwarf whorled pogonia (a rare orchid); the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) might intervene and request a survey of the area for the plant. Though the work planned is located in a floodplain and the plant is found in upland habitats, M. Jacobs said a survey would still be required. C. Fisher reported that she did a survey of the area all along the trail, found no evidence of the plant in question, and submitted a report to M. Jacobs.

Old Mill Reserve (OMR): D. Genes discussed having Peter Hoyt (DPW) mow the path around OMR as he did in November, 2020. A. Tappan asked about getting some of the younger pines cut.

D. Genes reported that Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has shown no interest in taking on the work necessary to maintain the reserve as an early succession habitat. C. Fisher noted that when young pines were cut back some years ago, the work was done by Thompson School students, with Coop. Ext. Wildlife Specialist, Matt Tarr, supervising. D. Genes noted that NRCS approval would be needed prior to undertaking any cutting, and that the LCC would need to give thought as to how to handle manpower. D. Genes will contact Don Quigley for his suggestions as to how to proceed.

NEW BUSINESS:

LRP Parking Lot Expansion: The BOS approved the expansion on June 28, 2021. C. Rossi reported that the lot will stop behind the area where the electrical shed is located. The trail to the River won't be touched. Whether the expanded lot will be deemed too close to the new kiosk and trail was discussed, and members agreed to take no action (i.e., moving kiosk and trailhead) until the work on the expansion is completed. Top soil in the expanded area will be hauled away, screened and used to top dress the grassy areas in the part as a deterrent to cicada killer wasps. M. Jacobs determined there will be no wet soils impact. Water will flow towards the park's southern boundary; C. Rossi met with the abutter, who will notify the Town should there be a problem. D. Genes suggested that, once the work is done, perhaps the Recreation Committee be contacted about beautifying the area around the LRP sign.

BioBlitz: A. Tappan reported that she, C. Fisher and M. Winder along with Stafford County Forestry Field Specialist, Rebecca Digirolomo and U.S. Forest Service Entomologist, Marc Digirolomo will participate in the 2021 NH BioBlitz which will be co-partnered by the LCC and the UNH Cooperative Extension. The purpose of the 2021 BioBlitz is to collect data on species found on town-owned lands throughout NH. The event will take place in the TFC on September 18, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. The two will focus on forest insects, and will be limited to 20 participants. A. Tappan will check with Police Chief Tom Dronsfield about having participants park at the Public Safety Complex. A. Tappan, C. Fisher, and M. Winder will do a preliminary walk with R. Digirolomo and M. Digirolomo on July 13.

Lee Town Fair: Slated for Saturday, September 11, 2021. C. Fisher will contact Dick Babcock about borrowing his tent. Handouts on invasive species, animal tracks, pollinators, etc. will be on display. To tap in on people's concerns as well as curiosity about the emerald ash borer (EAB) study in the TFC, A. Tappan and M. Winder will organize a display on EAB. A. Tappan will contact R. Digirolomo about borrowing some of her EAB materials as part of the display. D. Genes suggested having a display/information about the ongoing work of the LTC.

Conservation Land Potential: D. Genes reported that Duane Hyde, Land Conservation Director at SELT, had contacted her about the Diberto property on York Lane. Of the three properties that are being sold by Mr. Diberto, this is the property that LCC members ranked the highest. D. Hyde suggested that there is a good possibility that this property, likely in the summer of 2022, will come forward as a candidate for conservation easement.

LCC Public Meetings Policy: D. Genes discussed when, speaking as Commission members, it is appropriate for LCC members to present information at public meetings. Bottom line: If the information hasn't been discussed at an LCC meeting, don't discuss it as an LCC member at a public meeting.

NH Association of Conservation Commissions (NHCC) Zoom Meeting, Right-to-Know Law:

A. Tappan reminded members that this meeting will take place on July 7, 2021, from 7:00-8:00

p.m. D. Genes sent an email with the relevant information and a link to sign up for the meeting last week.

Sandborn Easement: D. Genes reported that the attorneys for Phil Sandborn had informed her that Mr. Sandborn is conveying his interest in a trust he has created. There will be no change in the easement.

Change of Day of LCC Monthly Meeting: In order to avoid scheduling conflicts between LCC and BOS meetings, LCC members agreed to hold future monthly meetings on the last Tuesday of each month. As August's meeting will be held, as planned, on the 2nd, in order to not have a nearly two-month gap between meetings, September's meeting will be held on August 31.

Next Meeting: Monday, August 2, 2021

Submitted by:

Catherine Fisher