Lee Conservation Commission
Minutes of Meeting of November 9, 2020

As this meeting was held electronically, D. Genes began by reading the Right to Know Law checklist:

As Chairperson of the 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 authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to the meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor’s Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, this is to confirm that we are:

Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means;

We are utilizing the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting. All members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through the Zoom platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone 1-301-715-8592 and entering Meeting ID 882 6196 7818 and Password 374270 or by entering the same information through: zoom.us

b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting;

We previously gave notice to the public of how to access the meeting using Zoom, and instructions are provided on the Town of Lee’s website at: leenh.org

c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access;

If anybody has a problem, please call 603-234-8194.

d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting.

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting; we will adjourn the meeting and have it rescheduled to another time.

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: Catherine Fisher (Secretary), Dawn Genes, (Chair), Amanda Gourgue (Treasurer), Bill Humm, Dave Shay, Deb Sugerman, Anne Tappan
Ex Officio: Scott Bugbee
Technical Assistance: Caren Rossi
Guest: Mimi Winder
Approval of Minutes: D. Sugerman moved to accept, as written, the minutes of October 5, 2020; D. Shay seconded. 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 the Commission’s account is presently at $12,492.22 and is comprised of
   LCC Balance: $9,809.64
   David Allen Balance: $2,682.58

ZBA/Planning Board: A. Tappan reported that no ZBA issues had been brought to the Commission. Planning Board issues are discussed under “Old Business”.

Easement Monitoring/Easement Issues: Properties monitored in October and November were Brissard (10/7); Daley (10/14); Ellis Oyster River (10/21); Bickley/Chisholm (10/28); and Old Mill Reserve (11/4). C. Rossi reported that the Echo Ridge (Cooke/Schultz) property had been monitored. D. Sugerman reported that the Powder Major’s Forest had been monitored. The Verrette property is the year’s final property and will be monitored on November 11. The Commission thanked A. Gourgue for her work in scheduling the monitoring season and keeping both the Commission and property owners abreast of weekly sessions.

Hutton Property: D. Genes reported on a site visit with the abutters to the property, who have been made aware that their slash piles need to be removed.

Joe Ford Wildlife Sanctuary: A. Tappan reported that she and D. Genes and B. Humm walked the property line where the tree stands are located and found that one is just outside the property line and one is just inside the property. The latter stand has climbing spikes which were put in without permission and are therefore not legal. As the tree in question is a poplar (and not long-lived), and as the stands seem to have been in place for some time, the Commission decided that, beyond posting a “No-Hunting” sign nearby, no action will be taken.

Old Mill Reserve: Dave Price of the Department of Environmental Services (DES) met with an abutter to the property who accessed the Oyster River by making a trail from his property onto the easement causing erosion along the riverbank. D. Price informed the abutter that the river bank must be restored. Pending informing the Select Board of the action, letters stating the Town’s Trail Policy will be sent to this abutter and to residents at Capt. Parker Drive (abutting Maud Jones Memorial Forest) and James Farm residents abutting the easement there.

Education/Outreach: C. Fisher reported that she had written seven nature articles that appeared in the Commission’s Facebook page and/or the E-Crier. A. Gourgue reported that the number of people visiting the Commission’s Facebook page continues to grow.

OLD BUSINESS:
Barry Conservation 4-H Camp: D. Genes reported that Laura Gund, who continues to assist the Commission in advertising for a campership sponsee, has a camper lined up for 2021. L. Gund had asked if, because no camper was sent in 2020, the Commission wanted to send two campers in the coming year. B. Humm suggested that, due to COVID-19, it would be best to send a single camper.

Clay Lane: C. Rossi reported that the proposal to remove gravel from the Town-owned property abutting Clay Lane has been withdrawn. Instead, the Town will propose clearing trees and leveling the ground in the front quarter acre of the property, 200’ from the closest abutting property on Daniel Drive, so as to use it as a storage/stockpile facility. Only the back trail on the property that will be affected, and C. Rossi noted that all the trails on Town property were created without Select Board approval. The Planning Board will hold a public hearing regarding this proposal, which will be posted in the E-Crier. A. Tappan requests that the Commission be informed when the hearing is scheduled.

Invasive Species In Lee:
Treatment: Two more invoices were received from Bio-Spray: $370.00 for treating the Ford property and $520.00 for treating the Rothwell Reserve. D. Sugerman moved to approve payment to Bio-Spray in the amount of $890.00 and D. Shay seconded. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved by members of the Commission.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB): B. Humm reported that he had been contacted by an entomologist regarding a very large ash tree at the junction of routes 155 and 155A, which, if located on Town property, the entomologist offered to treat preventatively for EAB. As the tree is not located on Town land, S. Bugbee asked if the property owner had been contacted to see if they have interest in having it treated. A. Tappan suggested that, as EAB is present in Lee, the Commission should consider educating the public about what it is and what to do about it. The link to the “EAB Preparation Checklist for NH Towns and Cities” will be sent to CC members, and could be published in the E-Crier and the Commission’s Facebook page. Later in the year, an outside session, perhaps on Town property, could be held to educate folks on identifying ash trees and looking for signs of EAB such as ash blonding. M. Winder offered to take part in such a workshop.

Trail Maintenance Workshop: Hosted jointly with the UNH Cooperative Extension Service (CES), D. Genes reported that the event was a great success, with 10-11 people from Lee, Barrington, and Durham participating while observing COVID-19 protocols. The rogue trail was blocked off and a new trail created. Some follow-up work may be useful. Payment of the $150.00 invoice, approved in October by the Commission, will be forwarded to A. Gourgue for payment.

Town Owned Land Permitted Uses: D. Genes reported that all properties that required “No Hunting” signs had been posted and that the Lee Police Department and PZB have been notified. Also discussed was the creation of a “cheat sheet” listing what is and isn’t permitted on each of Lee’s town-owned conserved properties.

NEW BUSINESS:

Proposed Trails Committee: D. Sugerman discussed the draft she had drawn up outlining the work of such a committee, which would be a subcommittee of the Commission and have a Commission member as liaison. Trail Committee members would be sworn in, hold meetings, and post agendas and minutes. Activities would include walking trails and reporting findings, and assisting in workdays to improve trail conditions. D. Genes moved that D. Sugerman become the liaison to the Trail Committee; C. Fisher seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved by members of the Commission.

Trail Maintenance Needs: C. Fisher reported on several areas in the Town Forest’s trail system which need work. Several bridges are in poor repair. With trail usage greatly increased during the pandemic, there are associated problems, partly due to fading blazes. Where the Yellow Trail descends the westernmost ravine, hikers have been descending straight up and down the ravine, rather than using the switchback. By using deadfall to block the descent/ascent pathway, outlining the path to the switchback with logs, and posting temporary arrows indicating the correct pathway, this problem has been resolved.

DES Letter to James Farm Resident: D. Genes reported that a resident of James Farm had received a letter from DES regarding violations regarding filled wetlands and blocking a culvert. The Town hired the engineering firm of Jones and Beech to put a drainage easement on the property.

2019-2020 Annual Town Report: Reports from Town Commissions and Committees are due November 24; Commission members with information they’d like included in the report should forward to information to C. Fisher.

Membership Dues:

NHCC: A motion was made by C. Fisher and seconded by D. Sugerman to pay the annual dues of $325.00. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved by members of the Commission.

Southeast Land Trust (SELT): As no dues were paid in 2019, a motion was made by A. Tappan and seconded by B. Humm to pay the 2019 dues of $300.00. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved by members of the Commission.

NH Timberland Owners Association (NHTOA) Annual Fund: As NHTOA dues, in the amount of $30.00, were paid on March 6, 2020, no action was taken.

Mowing, Joe Ford Wildlife Sanctuary: Chuck Cox annually mows parts of the Ford field. A motion was made by A. Tappan and seconded by D. Shay to engage C. Cox to mow the field, amount to be paid based on mowing time. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved by members of the Commission.

Recommendation to the Select Board for Commission Membership as Alternate: B. Humm moved and A. Tappan seconded that Mimi Winder be approved as an alternate member of the Conservation Commission. A roll call vote was taken and all Commission members voted to approve the motion.

Acting Secretary for December’s Meeting: A. Gourgue will take the minutes of December’s meeting.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, December 7, 2020

Submitted by: ________________________________________________________

Catherine Fisher