

Litchfield Conservation Commission

(Draft) Meeting Minutes

July 25th, 2018

Minutes approved 8/22/2018

Present: Thomas Levesque, Vice-Chair; Matt Lepore, Member; Jack Curtin, Alternate; Harry Menzigian, Alternate.

Absent: Joan McKibben, Chair; Sharon Jones, Member; Michael Croteau, Member; Marion Godzik, Alternate; Roger St. Laurent, Member; Kevin Bourque, Selectmen's Rep.

Members of the Public Present: Andrew Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Jefferson, Mr. Jeffrey (Jeffrey Land Survey, Inc.)

Vice-Chair Thomas Levesque calls the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Harry Menzigian and Jack Curtin are appointed alternates, forming a quorum of 4 members (2 members and 2 appointed alternates).

New Business:

Jefferson Subdivision - Mr. Jeffrey came before the Commission at the request of Joan McKibben to answer questions regarding the placement of a driveway on the Jefferson property. Vice-Chair Levesque asks if the driveway is running between two wetlands. Mr. Jeffrey states it will only run north of the wetlands. Mr. Jeffrey then produces a site plan, which further shows that the driveway includes two culverts. Mr. Jeffrey produces a letter from the projects engineer stating that water flow to the north will decrease, in response to an abutters concern that the water flow to their property would be enhanced by the driveway. Vice-Chair Levesque asked if the Daltons were "amicable" to the engineering results. Mr. Jeffrey says they are to be brought up at the ZBA meeting and that he was "taken aback" at Chair McKibben's request to come before the Conservation Commission, needing to address the wetlands issue with the ZBA as well. Commissioner Menzigian asks how long the driveway will be. Mr. Jeffrey explains the driveway and the culverts for drainage. Commissioner Lepore asks for clarification on the site plan as to what is north of the driveway. Mr. Jeffrey states that water will be discharged north through the culverts, which was the concern of the Daltons, however, due to the contour of the land, Mr. Jeffrey explained that the water would be discharged in directions that would not impact the abutters (Daltons). Vice-Chair Levesque states that he will advise Chair McKibben that the Conservation Commission reviewed the plan and that the Commission had no further questions.

Lilac Court - Mr. Jeffrey again presents to the Commission about another development being added to 10 Lilac Court. He explains that a caretaker house is to be placed on the property over

an old sand pit. Heavy equipment trafficked the property to extract sand from the sand pit. He further explains that a culvert was spanned between two wetlands. It was between these two wetlands that the trucks accessed the sand. The distance between the wetlands was estimated at 16 feet. No further impact on the wetlands would be needed. Commissioner Menzigian asked the Commission which site Chair McKibben wanted the Commission to visit. Mr. Jeffrey suggested a site walk on the Lilac Court property. Vice-Chair states that there are no further questions on this property. Commissioner Lepore asks if the homeowner would allow a site walk. Commissioner Menzigian concurs, stating he would like to do a site walk. Mr. Jeffrey gives directions to the property.

Old Business:

Rules of Conduct - Commissioner Lepore discusses how he would like the Commission to gather existing rules and craft new ones if necessary regarding rules on conservation properties so that they may then be prominently displayed at all the conservation areas and available at a public place (town hall or the library) so it is easily accessible to the public.

Moore's Falls Shooting Activity - Commissioner Menzigian discussed the investigation into target shooting activity at Moore's Falls. He explains that he is looking for a definition of outdoor activity to see if target shooting is acceptable activity on conservation areas. He discusses the incident where abutters made contact with the shooters. The shooters claimed that target shooting was acceptable there, hence why Commissioner Menzigian was looking for the definition of outdoor recreation. Vice-Chair Levesque asks if anyone had made contact with the shooters. Commissioner Menzigian stated that Dar-Col staff confronted those target shooting. Commissioner Menzigian believes the incident is likely to occur again. Commissioner Lepore said his greatest concern about the target shooting was that the shooters were firing in the direction of St. Francis and they were not far away. He continued with saying there was no backdrop behind the targets. Commissioner Menzigian says he would like to make contact with Chair McKibben to see if a definition of outdoor activity was given by the official in Concord. Commissioner Lepore asks if it would be a good idea to notify St. Francis of the incident. Vice-Chair Levesque says it might be wise, but they should notify police if they hear shooting. Commissioner Curtin asks if the shooting was occurring "off-hours." Commissioner Menzigian says yes, and that St. Francis probably isn't aware of the incident at all, then asks if Joan should notify the school (St. Francis). Vice-Chair Levesque says to wait until Chair McKibben returns. Commissioner Lepore shows the Commission pictures he took of the shooting activity, indicating the location of St. Francis behind the targets. Commissioner Lepore further explains a hazard, where target shooters were shooting across trails, at one location they were shooting next to a blind corner on the trail, where someone could round the bend without much notice to target shooters.

Untouched Properties and Trails - Commissioner Lepore inquires if the Commission would like to mark out locations for trails on the Birch Street property or tidy up existing trails in the property. Vice-Chair Levesque believes the main goal for the property there would be to clean it

up a bit. Commissioner Menzigian asks Commissioner Lepore if there is a lot of vegetation and overgrowth on the property. Commissioner Lepore states he visited the property in the winter, stating the property was in good shape, but that ATV activity was apparent, though how recent was unknown and some trails traversed over wetlands.

Bird House Project - Commissioner Curtin said there were no updates, other than he needed to get the bird houses from Commissioner St. Laurent to install them.

Other Business:

Locks - Commissioner Menzigian asks if there is any money in the budget for locks, since lock combinations are unknown, making kiosks inaccessible. Vice-Chair Levesque states bolt cutters can be used to remove the old locks and new ones may be purchased. Commissioner Menzigian asks if a hack saw can be used and that the target shooting signs should be placed inside the kiosk.

Trail Cameras - Commissioner Menzigian asks if it is possible to put up trail cameras to monitor activity in Moore's Falls, given recent incidents and the onset of Fall. Vice-Chair Levesque believes signage would be needed to inform visitors that trail cameras were in use, as he feels it is an invasion of privacy. Commissioner Lepore states that, while he is unsure, he is not aware of there being an invasion of privacy if it is on public property. Commissioner Menzigian says the Commission has been fortunate that the campfires have not escalated into forest fires. He informs the Commission that he spoke with the police chief, who stated the police will monitor the area for cars parked at the area, not entering the park for patrols, at it will take an officer out of service for some time. Commissioner Menzigian believes cameras would be effective in reminding the public of illegal conduct and being aware of cameras might help deter that activity further. Commissioner Lepore noted that there are no signs indicating prohibited conduct at conservation areas, but compiling and posting the rules could help. Members of the Commission were unsure of the 2018 budget, but Commissioner Menzigian assured the Commission that trail cameras would only be around \$90. Commissioner Lepore mentioned that these cameras could also be useful for documenting wildlife. Vice-Chair Levesque, Commissioner Menzigian, and Commissioner Lepore concur that legal counsel should be sought to determine if trail cameras can be used for security. The Commission discussed how the shooters who were approached by Dar-Col Stables staff were from out of town and accessed the park through the parking area on 3A. Commissioner Menzigian advised the Commission that target shooting was a town issue and that Fish & Game would only get involved if it was a hunting or poaching issue. Further shooting incidents in town were discussed.

Touring Conservation Areas - Commissioner Lepore had given a tour of Parker Park to town residents to show the remnants of the trolley track. He informed the Commission that this activity was not affiliated with the Conservation Commission, but simply his showing historical sites to fellow residents. He shared that residents enjoyed seeing the conservation area and were interested in touring more conservation areas. Commissioner Lepore proposed the idea that the

Commission give site walks on conservation areas to bring greater awareness about the Commission and lands in town. Vice-Chair Levesque noted that the School Conservation area is “sensitive.” Commissioner Menzigian asked if there were designated areas for swimming. Vice-Chair Levesque stated people do swim at Moore’s Falls, but the Commission should not designate areas promoting it.

Public Input- Mr. Thompson asked the Commission if the parking area at Moore’s Falls was being paved. The Commission was not notified, but some members had heard of the work at the site. Vice-Chair Levesque remembered hearing that gravel was to be placed on the parking area and that he would contact the road agent the following day. Mr. Thompson asked if the Commission was going to do a site walk at Birch Street. Commissioner Lepore recalled a site walk being planned. The intended date was 7/27. Commissioner Menzigian inquired about maps of the town properties. Mr. Thompson stated he had made maps of some conservation areas, but would need to do site walks to confirm the trails within.

Adjournment- Commissioner Menzigian made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 PM. Commissioner Lepore seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Lepore, Member