

Litchfield Conservation Commission
Held on June 3, 2021, 7:00 P.M.
Litchfield Town Hall, 2 Liberty Way

Minutes Approved on 8/5/2021

In attendance: Matt Lepore-Chairman Joan McKibben-Vice-Chair, Roger St.Laurent, Kevin Lynch-Selectmen's Rep., Harry Menzigian, John Curtin (alternate)
Dianne Plansky (alternate), Marion Godzik (alternate), Jayson Brennen (alternate),

Members absent: Michael Croteau, Andrew Thompson (alternate)

(7:00) Matt calls the meeting to order in the large conference room. Member roll call commences. No public comments.

Two alternates Dianne P., and Jayson B. are appointed as voting members for this meeting.

(7:00) Map 22 lot 11, 522 Charles Bancroft Hwy (CBH) Theroux proposed gas station access proposal. Rene Theroux, owner, Morgan Hollis, Esq. are present and Jim Petropulos (remotely) will explain the request.

Due to NHDOT regulations the proposal at 522 CBH cannot have two curb cuts on Rte. 3A (CBH). The applicant is asking the Commission to look at three different options for access to the gas station. A site walk was done in May by the Commission and applicant.

Option 1 & 2 come across town land at Moore's Falls. Option 3 closes the access to Moore's Falls at CBH and has the access on 522 CBH with an easement to Moore's Falls. There is also a Fish and Game easement of the top 18 acres of Moore's Falls that prohibits pavement or commercial use. Fish and Game would have to be in agreement to option 1 & 2. The applicant would agree to improvements the town wanted to replace the parking and buffer at Moore's Falls.

There were questions from the Commission regarding width of pavement, traffic flow on the site etc.

The consensus of the Commission was that option #3 would be preferred. The applicant thought NHDOT would not see that as a hardship, as they define it, and they may not approve that idea.

It was suggested that the applicant in partnership with the Town officials (Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, State Reps.) consult with NHDOT regarding the problem of access. Harry M. made a **MOTION** that the Commission suggests option #3 and that the town officials mentioned above with the applicant request option 3 from NHDOT. Kevin L. seconds the motion. Discussion followed on the motion: Matt L. has a concern about precedent to using conservation land. Roger S. felt we have to be bendable for a tax base. Jayson agrees with option 3 but felt 2 is okay. The motion passes 7-0-0.

(7:45) Conservation Plan Scope of Work NRPC (Nashua Regional Planning Commission) via Director Jay Minkarah submitted a scope of work for NRPC to create a plan for Litchfield. Jayson commented in addition a land preservation plan could potentially include strategies for land protection such as 1. Acquire weighted ranking criteria, 2. List with the ranking, 3. Alternate options to land protection such as buying development rights, easements, right of first refusal.

Marion G. mentions the NHACC handbook has many good ideas for land protection. Kevin thinks there should be a sub-committee. Matt feels sub-committee in tandem with NRPC plan. Dianne makes a **MOTION** to contract with NRPC for a conservation plan for \$4,500 with a sub-committee. Harry seconds the motion. The motion passes 7-0-0

(7:52) Matt asks the alternate members who would be interested in filling the vacant membership position. Dianne, Jayson, Marion, previously Andrew answered in the affirmative.

(7:54) Weather Program Matt reported he has been in contact with the National Weather Service in Grey, ME. There would be no cost to this program; the town could start archiving weather data. Private citizens have volunteered to collect data. Matt makes a **MOTION** to adopt the weather program. Dianne seconded the motion. Motion passes 7-0-0.

(8:02) Matt brings up the possibility of the commission meeting twice a month. Marion doesn't feel we need two meetings a month because of people's different lifestyles (how busy people are) and the possible use of sub-committees. Kevin: sub-committees could meet on the off week. Jayson could go either way sub-committee or twice a month or a wait and see approach. Matt tables for further discussion.

(8:07) Litchfield State Forest expanded parking lot. The state wanted input from town agencies. They will be put in a gate to restrict access by vehicles to the forest. Kevin requests a rendering of the proposal.

(8:09) Lawn Mower proposal. Jayson presents option 1 a zero turn mower with a 52" deck, same mower that highway dept. has for \$7,900. Option 2 a Toro mower that highway dept. has that needs \$2-3K in repairs. People have been using their own equipment to mow areas such as the Muster Field (Rte. 3A across from old fire station). Matt stated highway now mows at the historic society building maybe we could get them so come across the street and mow the Muster Field. Roger said the DR mower that we own has a finish mower attachment you can get but the DR mower has seen a lot of hours work. Matt will reach out to Highway to see what maintenance they would do on conservation land. Jayson will do further investigation.

(8:24) Community Garden. Dianne reported they were able to plant six blueberry bushes at the field at the intersection of 3A and Pinecrest Rd. where a proposed community garden will be. Dianne thanked numerous Litchfield citizens for their help in getting this accomplished. She also thanked Ray Durocher for donating the bushes. She mentioned a possibility of goats to get

rid of the poison ivy, but it may be too extensive. Steve Normanton is working on irrigation for the garden site.

(8:29) Luanna Volmer was present and would like to volunteer as an alternate to the Commission. She has been a resident since 2000 and worked on other projects in town. She is a broker/realtor and familiar with the town. Kevin L. made a **MOTION** to recommend Luanna as an alternate to the Selectmen. Harry M. seconded the motion. Motion passes 7-0-0.

(8:31) Stage Crossing Easement. Matt has talked with Thomas Donovan from the NH Attorney General's Office and Troy Brown, Town Administrator both have suggested writing to Stage Crossing Condominium Association. Matt had a sample of the letter. Harry M. makes a **MOTION** to send the letter to Stage Crossing and include a copy of the 12/13/2019 Attorney General letter that was addressed to Stage Crossing. Roger S. seconded the motion. Motion passes 7-0-0.

(8:38) Digging at historical sites, signage placed. Matt explained the problem at Moore's Falls of someone digging at the historic lock tenders site. He removed the loose bricks per instructions of the president of the Litchfield historical society. He further stated that the commission needs to do property inspections annually of conservation property with the goal of all being inspected by 12/31/21. Harry makes a **MOTION** to inspect all properties by 12/31/21. Dianne seconded the motion. Motion passes 7-0-0.

(8:41) Financial report. Jayson suggests we have a financial report at each meeting.

(8:42) Jayson presents two different scenarios that could create pedestrian access in the north end of town from the Albuquerque Ave. multi-purpose trail to the town owned Moore's Falls property. With the possibility of three different proposals coming forward soon for development it may be possible to get better pedestrian access.

Roger St.Laurent leaves at 8:45 pm due to health reasons.

(8:47) Harry has compiled a list of hiking recommendations for local hiking/walking. He also went to the Fish and Game office in Concord and brought back many brochures and free items that fish and game hands out to the public. Harry mentioned that he can teach outdoor education.

Jayson thought it would be beneficial to have two or three classes per year for outdoor ed. With LCTV or the library.

(8:54) Duck Box Placement. Matt reported Deering, NH has a lot of information regarding placement and keeping track of activity at duck boxes in their town. Matt would like to place a box at Bixby Meadow. Kevin L. will look for the large bat box the town purchased a while ago.

(9:01) Old Business

ArcGIS Mapping tabled until Andrew T. is back.

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Water withdrawal from surface water, re-visit with the Selectmen.

Musterfield upkeep. Jayson/Matt revisit at the next meeting. Historical Comm. wants to watch out for old foundations.

John Curtin (Jack) is appointed as a voting member for the remainder of the meeting. (Roger S. had left the meeting)

Rain Report

May 2021 10" of rain recorded by Roger S.

Next meeting is July1, 2021 7:00 p.m.

Jack C. has made the plaques to repair the Moore's Falls interpretive trail. Joan has printed the verbage and had it laminated.

Jayson mentioned we need trail maps at Moore's Falls. Joan stated we have old ones but they could use updating.

Approval of April 1 and May 6 minutes - tabled.

Dianne made a **MOTION** to go into a non-public session per RSA 91:3(d). Harry seconded the motion. Roll call vote all in favor.

(9:24) Kevin made a **MOTION** to come out of non-public. Diane seconded the motion. Roll call vote all in favor.

(9:25) Matt made a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. Harry seconded the motion. Motion passes 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan McKibben

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Minutes Recorded by
J. McKibben