



# Litchfield Conservation Commission

Litchfield Town Hall, 2 Liberty Way

Meeting Minutes: August 5, 2021

Minutes Approved 9/2/21

## 1. In Attendance

**Members Present:** Matt Lepore, Joan McKibben, Kevin Lynch, Harry Menzigian, Dianne Plansky, Jayson Brennen, Michael Croteau, Luanna Vollmer

**Members Absent:** John Curtain, Andrew Thompson

**Others in Attendance:** None

## 2. Call to Order

Chairman Matt Lepore calls the meeting to order at 7:01pm

## 3. Public Non-Agenda Business

None

## 4. New Business

### A) Meeting Etiquette (7:04pm)

Mr. Lepore requests that discussions be concise as our meetings have been running 3 hours.

### B) Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions for Conservation Purposes – Brookfield Acres (7:05pm)

Brookfield Estates – Present for Estate John Noseworthy, Rick Charbonneau, Atty Morgan Hollis.

Present to discuss the covenants and restrictions for conservation purposes on the lower half of the property on Map 15, Lot 14-15. Brookfield Acres presented a map showing property lines, wetlands, easement areas, and non-disturb areas with the intent to get clarification on what areas of the property can and cannot be farmed. The dots and dashes on the map are confusing and do not seem to accurately reflect current farming on the property. Brookfield Acres seeks input from the Conservation Commission on where farming can occur and specifically highlighted two areas (in

yellow) on the map where the map symbology was confusing. Brookfield Acres contends that the highlighted areas (the areas of confusion on the map) have always been farmed and should be able to continue be farmed. They would like to be able to farm the land as is has been for many years and would like to be able to sell/lease the land for farming purposes.

**Motion:** Joan McKibben made a motion to support the idea of farming on Map 14, Lot 14-15 in the “yellow areas” (as described on the presented map) and to write letter to the Planning Board stating that the Conservation Commission supports it as an agricultural use.

**Second:** Selectman Lynch

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** Passes 6-0-1 (M. Croteau abstains)

C) **Land Preservation Plan (7:25pm)**

Presented by J. Brennen. Mr. Brennen brought up the need to develop a Land Preservation Plan which will provide a strategy on how we purchase and protect property and provides a living plan on how we move forward. Estimates that it will be a 15 page document that will be completed by the end of the year.

Mr. Lepore suggested that this was a topic during the May meeting and suggested that a subcommittee be formed. This would run in tandem to living Conservation Plan currently being developed by NRPC. Discussion of gaining information from members was to have Mr. Brennen poll members between meetings and then provide info collected during the next meeting.

**Motion:** Mr. Menzigian made a motion to form a subcommittee. Ms. Plansky added that Mr. Brennen “chair” the subcommittee.

**Second:** M. Croteau

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** Passes 6-0-1 (J McKibben abstains)

D) **Land Management Policy (7:35pm)**

Presented by M. Lepore. A draft Land Management Policy was distributed for review by Commissioners. Mr. Lepore requested that members read the policy and discuss it at the September meeting.

E) **Communication Policy (7:40pm)**

Presented by M. Lepore. Mr. Lepore presented a guideline for how we communicate in and out of meetings. Commissioners reviewed and various additions and modifications were recommended. Mr. Lepore will update and distribute a revised

version to that it can be read and commented on by Commission members and voted on during the September meeting.

**F) Land Acquisition Fund Cap Adjustment (7:45pm)**

Presented by M. Lepore. Possible warrant article to increase the maximum amount of funds that can be in the Conservation Fund. After discussion of the options, it was decided that Mr. Lepore would draft a warrant article regarding this topic and present it at the next meeting.

**G) Meeting Minutes (7:50pm)**

Meeting minutes are in arrears from April-June needing to be voted on and July's minutes are ready to be approved.

April Minutes – Motion to approve by J. McKibben, seconded by H. Menzigian.  
Motion passes 4-0-3

May Minutes – Motion to approve by H. Menzigian, seconded by M. Lepore.  
Motion passes 7-0-0

June Minutes – Motion to approve by D. Plansky, seconded by H. Menzigian.  
Motion passes 6-0-1

Awaiting minutes for non-public session

July Minutes – Motion to approve by K. Lynch, seconded by H. Menzigian.  
Motion passes 6-0-1

**H) ADA Compliant Trail – Lonely Fort (8:01pm)**

Presented by M. Lepore. Pursuing what it will take to make the Lonely Fort Trail ADA compliant. Will research and will update at a future meeting.

**I) Weather Station Purchase (8:05pm)**

Presented by M. Lepore. Continuing discussion on the potential purchase of a weather station that would be managed by the Conservation Commission and installed on the Fire Department roof. The weather station will connect to the internet and broadcast live weather information.

Mr. Lepore stated that he researched weather stations and identified the Ambient Weather WS-2000 Smart Weather Station with remote monitoring and alerts as a preferred weather station product to purchase. John Brunelle will set up at Fire Station and the info will be published on the Town's web page. Cost of the station is \$289.99. Matt will be maintaining the program.

**Motion:** Mr. Brennen made a motion to spend \$289.99 on the Ambient Weather weather station at a cost of \$289.99 to be funded through the Conservation Commission Education fund.

**Second:** M. Croteau

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** Passes 7-0-0

J) **Fishing Derby (8:10pm)**

Presented by H. Menzigian. Mr. Menzigian discussed fishing derby and stated that the cost of fish is \$650. The State of NH will match the fish purchase. Mr. Menzigian stated that if the location is at Chase Brook, some work may need to be done at the site. Alternative sites include the Londonderry Fish & Game Pond and Darrah Pond. Harry will lead the effort and will work with the Recreation Commission and citizen Paul Lemire. Mr. Menzigian to contact Gene Ducharme (Chase Brook land owner) and the Recreation Commission to further discussions. The Fishing Derby will also require a permit from the State. Mr. Menzigian requested a motion to add the purchase of fish to the Conservation Commission budget.

**Motion:** Mr. Lepore made a motion to include a budget of \$650 for the purchase of fish in the upcoming Conservation Commission budget.

**Second:** J. Brennen

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** Passes 6-0-1 (J McKibben abstained)

K) **Equipment Purchase (8:30pm)**

Presented by J. Brennen. Brief discussion on purchasing a tractor to support maintenance and expansion of Conservation properties/trails. Intent was to split the purchase with the Recreation Commission. However, it does not look like Recreation can use impact fees to support the purchase. Mr. Brennen suggested that we table the discussion until Recreation is able to determine if funding options are available and how/if they will fund their half.

M. Lepore also presented an alternative by potentially splitting the cost of a “side-by-side” with the Police Department and attaching a mower to that. Another option is to repair the Police Department’s ATV. Discussion tabled until future meeting.

L) **Muster Field Inspection and Possible Trail (8:32pm)**

Presented by M. Lepore. Inspection was done by M. Lepore, J. McKibben, D. Plansky, and L. Vollmer. All bounds were located. Small amount of trash found and picked up. Found berries and way lots of Bittersweet. Signs of local wildlife during the inspection and it was discussed that a trail would be a good addition to the property. J. Brennen brought up a map, stated that Steve Normanton is receptive to having people walk through his property, and stated that there is potential to connect Parker Park with the Muster Field, pending permission from private property owners. D. Plansky asked that J. Brennen talk to the private property owners but K. Lynch stated that he would

do it. K. Lynch will speak to the resident that abuts that land to see if they would have an objection to continuing it through their land.

**Motion:** Ms. Plansky made a motion to clear a trail through the Muster Field property.

**Second:** J. McKibben

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** Passes 7-0-0

**M) Moore's Falls Parking (8:40pm)**

Presented by M. Lepore. Inspection of Moore's Falls completed by M. Lepore, H. Menzegan, D. Plansky, and J. Brennen. M. Lepore stated that property is in good shape and suggested cutting a trail from the parking lot, through the field, down the slope, to the old trolley track. This will create a bigger loop for people to enjoy. M. Lepore will reach out to Fish & Game on the feasibility of a trail.

**N) Assist Police with Wildlife (8:51pm)**

Presented by M. Lepore. Conservation was notified of an injured hawk and assisted Litchfield Police. Hawk was brought to rehab center by Litchfield Police (J. Flynn). M. Lepore asked if the Commission would like to be more involved with these types of activities.

**O) Leave No Trace (8:52pm)**

Presented by M. Lepore. More signs are needed at Moore's Falls, specifically a "Leave No Trace" sign. J. Brennen offered to purchase the signs using Beautification Calendar Money. Signs to be purchased in August 2021.

## **5. Old Business**

**A) ArcGIS Mapping (8:53pm)**

Presented by M. Lepore. Mr. Brennen to take over ArcGIS implementation from A. Thompson, until Mr. Thompson is back with the Commission this fall. D. Plansky asked if J. Brennen could do a live demo of the program. Mr. Brennen said "yes".

**B) Meeting Twice a Month (8:53pm)**

Presented by M. Lepore. Continued discussion on meeting two times a month. D. Plansky suggested that we start the meetings earlier. 6:30 was recommended new start time. Ms. McKibben brought up that we would be ousted from room soon due to budget meetings. D. Plansky suggested we don't allow it. Other options for all were discussed.

**Motion:** Ms. Plansky made a motion to start Conservation Commission at 6:30pm.

**Second:** J. McKibben

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** 7-0-0

Vote 7-0-0 in favor of motion.

## 6. Other Business

### A) **No Hunting Signs** (9:00pm)

Presented by L. Vollmer. Ms. Vollmer stated that “No Hunting” signs on the Merrimack River have been washed away on the Merrimack side of the river. This has caused a safety issue on the Litchfield side of the river. Ms. Vollmer brought this to the attention of the Commission and the guidance of the Commission was that she would have to contact Merrimack as NH Fish and Game told her it was up to them.

### B) **Community Garden Update & Normanton Farm** (9:05pm)

Presented by D. Plansky. D. Plansky and J. Brennen attended the celebration of the signing of the Agrarian Commons transfer of land from the Monadnock Land Trust, making Agrarian the new stewards of this land in Litchfield. It was a wonderful event and we were able to meet the board of Agrarian, as well as meet with their lawyer to discuss the lease of the garden land as well the land behind it to add onto Parker Park. There has been a delay but we will be able to move forward soon.

### C) **US Fish & Wildlife Discussion** (9:10pm)

Presented by M. Lepore. M. Lepore has been contacted by US Fish and Wildlife regarding a project they call the Great Thicket refuge. They are looking for shrub areas as well as new forest area. They have money and want to buy land.

### D) **Merrimack River Advisory Committee** (9:15pm)

Presented by M. Croteau. Merrimack River Advisory meets monthly in Nashua. There is an opening for another member from Litchfield. To join, go to NH Rivers program for an application. It is open to any Conservation Member or town resident.

### E) **Planning Board Workshop** (9:17pm)

Presented by M. Croteau. Mr. Croteau invited any interested Conservation Commission members to the Planning Board workshop dealing with zoning and permitted uses of wetland areas. It will be on 8/17/2021 at 7pm.

## 7. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn meeting and to onto non-public session per RDA 91-A:3(d) by K. Lynch at 9:15pm. J. Brennen seconded,

Roll call vote 7-0-0

Out of non-Public at 9:25

Respectfully submitted by

Dianne Plansky  
Secretary