

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
October 13, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Bob Boynton, Chairman; Karen Miller; Kleta Dudley; Mike Bara; Matt Oliveira; Susan Mallett, Secretary

At 7:30 Bob opened the meeting.

Alternates: Bob motioned to make Mike and Kleta full time members for this meeting. Karen seconded the motion and all were in agreement.

Account Balances: Bob noted the total in the Conservation Commission accounts was \$274,427.69 as of Sept 30th.

Minutes review and approval: The commission reviewed the minutes for September 2022. Bob made a motion to accept the September 14th minutes, Karen seconded, and all were in favor.

Land Conservancy: Bob noted he got a call from Chris Wells, Director of Piscataquog Land Conservancy, and he wants to know if the Conservation Commission would allocate up to \$30k for Skinny Kat transaction. Bob made a motion to allow expenditure up to \$30k, Karen seconded, and all were in favor.

Chris Wells, also asked if the Conservation Commission would commit up to \$30k for the Montagu transaction as well. Bob made a motion to allow up to \$30k, Kleta seconded, and all were in favor.

Bob asked the Commission members if we should take into consideration when the landowner has the means. It was thought that we should look at each case and decide with each case. Mike asked if the money went to Piscataquog, and Bob affirmed that was the case. Mike also mentioned that Ms. Montagu already spent money on survey and that should not be done again by Piscataquog.

Members of the Conservation Commission visited the Moran property, and Bob feels they put the wetland crossing in the best place. Bob put that in the letter to the ZBA for consideration in his ZBA Application. Mike noted there was one issue, and that was the lots being split officially on record. Sue noted the next ZBA meeting is the actual hearing.

Bob checked into filling ponds with water from other bodies of water and the state does not allow that. There are laws against it, and it can introduce invasive plants and animals. Susan will put up a post on Facebook page letting people know it is not allowed.

Commission Appointments: Bob commented that the appointments were accepted by the Board of Selectmen. The sheet showing members and term expiration dates. The next step is for everyone to go to the Town Clerk, and sign a form and retake the oath, this must be done before November 1st. Susan noted the Town Clerk is open late on Thursdays.

Next up was nominations for Vice Chair and Chair. Karen nominated Bob for Chair, and Matt seconded that, all were in agreement. Matt nominated David for Vice Chair, Karen seconded and all were in agreement.

Monitoring Properties: Bob noted we have a few smaller properties that can be seen from the road, and suggested those can be monitored less often, perhaps 2 or 3 years. Everyone was in agreement with that suggestion.

Tridam/Dixie Blease property: Bob discussed the concept of attractive nuisance. He spoke with Primex, the Town's insurer, and they say it would be a liability. Town would be covered, but costs would go up. The penstock would be a massive expense and undertaking to remove it, and there is no practical way to make it safer. There is also the end of life and maintenance of the penstock to consider. There is much appreciation for the offer of donation from Dixie, but the liability of the penstock is to be seriously considered. Suggestions of putting up fencing were determined to not be a reasonable option. Bob noted that if the Conservation Commission was open to accepting that he would like to run it by the Board of Selectmen to get their feedback. Bob noted that another reason to consider the property is that it is a river buffer, the property is 40 feet wide, but the Shore land protection is 50 feet already, so owning would not be any further protection.

Bob asked for a show of hands who was opposed to accepting the property donation, and all in attendance raised their hands. It is unanimous that the Town should not take the property donation, generally because of the liability of the penstock.

Bob noted we need to look for other properties to protect. The Conservation Commission used to inspect the wetlands applications in front of the ZBA, but now the state is streamlining the process. So it would be good to target properties that protect water specifically. Bob asks that everyone keep eyes and ears open for some properties.

Bob mentioned monitoring forms will be discussed next meeting. Susan provided some samples of what other towns use, and will share copies with everyone at the next meeting. We can pick what we like and modify to create our own. Bob will provide a list of the properties we need to monitor.

At 8:45 pm Bob motioned to adjourn, Kleta seconded, and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Mallett