

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 8, 2016

PRESENT: Bob Boynton-Chairman, Matt Oliveira, Jack Messe, David McTigue, Lisa Oden, Karen Miller, Lori Rautiola

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Office.

Lisa made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2016 meeting. David seconded and it passed unanimously.

Committee Reports:

Trails: Bob asked if the Commission should still hand out the trails maps and Matt noted it is a good idea as he spoke with Joanne yesterday and she told him people come in often for those maps.

Signs: David gave a list of signs that are finished and ready to be hung. The Board decided the Nussdorfer sign will be hung on two trees that are side by side and the rest will be hung on 4x4 posts in the ground. The Board also discussed having a pamphlet made up with the trails on it and a road map with directions to the trailheads.

Lands: Bob questioned if the Commission should consider having all lands acquired by the Town become protected by a third party. The members discussed the pros and cons of having the lands in a third party easement and decided this would be something for the Commission to consider. If the first easement falls through, the secondary easement (third party) would pick up the property. Smaller properties are not recommended. The Board agreed it would be a case by case scenario to determine which properties would benefit. Bob noted the "criteria for purchasing conservation land" should be added in the Conservation Commission bylaws.

Water Resources: Bob asked for David's thoughts on the ground water levels in our area and if a big subdivision came into town, would there be enough water. David responded the density of use is low and has a good recharge and added the issue of quantity is pretty minor here. Bob questioned how much precipitation (rain and snow) goes back into the ground and David responded about 25% of the annual precipitation. Example: If 48 inches of water fell, 12 inches would go back into the ground. Bob noted we need to protect the homeowner's wells now and we need to look at protecting the future groundwater as well. Also, we share aquifers with other towns such as Rindge and Temple and the Commission should be collaborating with these towns to protect the aquifers.

The Commission conversed about the Groundwater Protection Ordinance. Bob asked Karen what kind of objections she thought the voters would have on an ordinance such as this. Karen's thoughts were: because of the pipeline project most people have become more aware of how important it is to protect the groundwater, and most people would want to protect the water. Bob noted it is important to have the Planning Board's support on the Groundwater Protection Ordinance. Karen mentioned when she

questioned the Planning Board they asked how to determine where the aquifers are located. David and Karen agreed the easiest way to locate them would be to have a map with latitude and longitude. Matt recommended using the GIS glue maps to locate the aquifers.

New Business: The Commission discussed whether or not to update the Natural Resource Inventory. Bob noted not much has changed in the natural resources but it would be nice to have an updated NRI and be proactive. Matt also felt it would be nice to have another one since it has been twelve years since the last one but questioned if it is worth spending the money. Bob added before the Commission buys any conservation land it would be a good idea to have a mini NRI done on the land. This would cost about \$2,000.

Bob gave an update on the timber harvest at the former Skat Club. 110 acres out of 292 are being cut and the land is in current use. There are 80 acres of wetlands on the property but according to the maps it has roughly 10 acres of wetlands. Wetlands are the lowest tax rate. Bob feels this is unfair to the rest of the taxpayers who are making up the difference and Bob if someone is putting wetlands into current use, they should have to hire a wetland scientist to give a report on the land to determine if it is wetlands.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Rautiola