

Town of Milton

Conservation Commission



PO Box 310
424 White Mountain Highway
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9/7/2022

Meeting Minutes

6:00PM

ATTENDANCE:

Members: Virginia Long (Chair), Steve Panish, Robert Weiss, Deb McCormack, Wayne Sylvester, Alternate Jeff LeClair. Alternate Sharon Buttrick was absent.

Virginia Long, Chair, opened the public session at 6:00PM.

1.) **Ascertain who is present and approve alternates to serve as full members if needed.**

2.) **Welcome to guests in attendance:** There were no guests.

3.) **Event announcements:**

Sept 10th, 8:30AM – Stewardship Walk at Jones Brook Park

Sept. 18th, 6:00PM- Economic & Community Planning, Milton Towne House

Sept. 22nd, 4:30PM – Ball Property walk with Rebecca Digirolomo & Matt Tarr

Sept. 23rd, 1:00PM – Workshop specifically for Conservation Commissions; Invasive species discussion and how towns can deal with them. Thompson Forest, Durham

Sept. 24th, 9:00AM – Hawk Walk with Scott Weidensaul, Birch Ridge Community Forest, New Durham

Oct. 6th, 9:00AM – NHLTC workshop “Thinking about Trails”, NHF&G Offices, Concord

4.) **Display/Circulate CC materials for lending (sign-out sheet):** Handbook for CC, State of NH Birds, AMC Trails Maintenance Book.

5.) **Review/Approve 8/3/2022 meeting minutes:**

8/3/2022 minutes: Deb – motion to **approve the 8/3/2022 minutes** with corrections. Seconded by Steve. Deb, Bob, Virginia, Steve voted to approve, Wayne abstained; the motion was approved.

6.) **Prime Wetlands Designation:** Virginia contacted environmental scientist, Mark West. Mark has previous experience guiding towns through the process. Since 2012, NH law does not offer buffer protections to wetlands. Milton currently has a 25-foot vegetative buffer. Mark feels it would be better for the town to have their own ordinance to expand buffer protections and suggests talking with the town to see if there will be support for this. Virginia is not familiar with the protections in place; it’s important to look at the wetlands and then figure out what protections may be needed.

Virginia asked each of the Commissioners to explain their top four wetlands.

Wayne: #7 (Fish Pond), #4 (Heron Rookery), #3 (Branch River – area flowing into NE Pond), #8 (Miller Brook).

Steve: #3 (Branch River), #5 (Jones Brook behind Farm Museum), #7 (Fish Pond), #13 (Miller Brook below Wiley Road).

Bob: #3 (Branch River), #8 (Miller Brook), maybe #11 (Heath along Salmon River bordering with Acton ME).

Deb: #4 (Heron Rookery), #7 (Fish Pond), #8 (Miller Brook), #10 (Ball Property)

Virginia – the most votes were #8 (Miller Brook where it enters into the Salmon Falls River) and #7 (Fish Pond). Both received 4 votes. #3 (Branch River) and #13 (Miller Brook) both received 3 votes. She also explained #3 is already fully protected. #7 has no protections as they are all private landowners. #8 has

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½ protection – in the Milton Mills area there are many private owners. #13 currently has no protections.

Virginia said walking trails are allowed in the 25-foot buffer zone in response to a question from Deb.

Virginia asked for opinions concerning possible next steps. Deb asked how will we know if the town will support this? Should we find this out first? Virginia suggested possibly leading a walk to show off the properties. Additional discussion revolved around the potential for town interest. All agreed this will not be ready for the town vote in March, 2023. Virginia – the question is should this be done as a local ordinance vs. prime wetland designation. It might be better to strengthen the already existing ordinance and see if the town would vote for that. She asked all the commission members to think about the next steps.

- 7.) Wetlands and Shoreland Permit Applications or Violations:** Virginia said they missed a permit application. There is also a possible violation (timber cut) at the Heron Rookery. With a vegetative buffer, it is required to leave 25-foot buffer and it does not appear this was done in all places. She asked if everyone was OK with Virginia submitting a violation on behalf of the MCC? They agreed it was OK. Bob asked what can be done about this. Virginia said the landowner would be responsible for restoring the area that was damaged. She will submit a blurb to Brian Boyers.

There is another possible violation which the Planning Board is also involved. The property owners are looking to park their RVs on their property (multiple family members). There may be other violations.

8.) Financial Report, Budget:

Steve: There have been no budget expenditures and no changes. He submitted a 2023 proposed budget (see attachment). Wayne asked about the training line-item at \$150. There may be more people interested in attending workshops. \$150 is not a whole lot and may allow for only 2-3 workshops. Based on other commission members approval, Steve said he would increase the training line-item to \$200. Deb said she thought there was going to be a line-item for the Trails Committee and Virginia concurred. Steve will add a Trails Committee line-item in the amount of \$100. With these two increases the final proposed 2023 budget is \$5,725. Virginia said this was \$500 less than last year's budget. Steve said we should be receiving money back from the Land-use Change act. He is unsure when that will happen.

Wayne – Motion to approve the proposed 2023 budget. Seconded by Bob. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

9.) MCC input into Planning Board revisions of Open Space Zoning ordinance:

There is a lot of interest in possible revising of the Open Space Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board will be working on this over the next several months. The Conservation Commission is also interested in being part of the process. According to Virginia, Bruce Woodruff is interested in hearing from the MCC.

10.) Town of Milton trails map: Review back page trails descriptions; Plan for printing/distribution/electronic dissemination.

Everyone agreed with the descriptions located on the back side. Discussion then revolved around printing – whether to have printing done at Staples or in-house; how many copies to print and the distribution of the maps. Virginia estimated to print 100 flyers will cost ~\$75.00. She will first check with



Chris Jacobs and bring to the next meeting for distribution. Wayne said even if only 10-20 were printed just to get them distributed. It is almost at the end of the season and may be too late for this year.

11.) Trails Volunteer Group: Approve final guidelines; Update on recent trails work (Jeff & Mike); Placement of historic sign at Jones Brook Park.

Jeff provided his update. He received recommendations from John Katwick on the possible location of hanging the sign. Recent trails work on Jones Brook: Mike is doing further exploration of the property and there may be possible expansions of the path.

Casey Road: When Jeff was on the trails, he met someone from Farmington who said they walk the trail almost every day and recently saw a mother bear and cubs. He is also interested in volunteering. Mike recently saw three bear cubs up a large pine tree. Jeff will put a warning sign on the kiosk. Jeff and Mike want to add a loop trail back from the Overlook Knoll. Virginia said if Jeff and Mike both agree it is a good trail to have or extend, go ahead and do it. Jeff will take care of the trail parking signs as the majority of them have deteriorated. Steve said to charge this to the Trails Committee line-item. Additional exciting news – the beaver dam continues to be built up.

Steve – Motion to approve the guidelines for the Trails volunteers. Seconded by Bob. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

12.) Town-owned Easements and Conservation Lands:

Easements: Kane Conservation will monitor in late September; Steve will monitor Current easement.

Fee properties: Update on plan to get easement on Old Ski Area (Virginia); Next Stewardship walk in September- Jones Brook Park; Update on plan for MMRG to get easement on Jones Brook Park/Payne (Virginia); MCC Management of Ball Property- Consider encouraging public use, Upcoming Wildlife Habitat Assessment with Rebecca Digirolomo and Matt Tarr, Letter to abutters of Ball Property about encroachments.

Old Ski Area update: Virginia contacted SELT. They are currently booked up but will look at in the future.

Ball Property: There are missing boundary markers. Virginia contacted Norway Plains – the cost to replace 9 pins will be ~\$2,500. Virginia said the work would be done in October/November, 2022.

Steve – Motion to approve up to \$3,000 for Norway Plains to remark the Ball Property. Seconded by Deb. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

13.) MMRG Projects in Milton: Approve MMRG Keating project letter; Holly Kimball project on Mason Road. Holly Kimball: Is the owner of 40 acres near Mason Road. MMRG would like to come and present to MCC at November 2 meeting.

Jones Brook Park: Not yet approved; timeline is October for MMRG approval. There will be donations requests - probably \$10,000 for Holly Kimball and \$5,000 for Jones Brook. Virginia explained because conservation funds will be expended, we are required to hold a public hearing. Each property would require a public hearing. She suggested these happen at the same time – possibly November meeting for MMRG to attend and present. All agreed to schedule the two public hearings at the November 2nd MCC meeting.

14.) New: Conservation Restriction assessment options:

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- 136 15.) Educational Outreach: TPPA, Facebook, Other.
137 16.) Update on Sam Plummer Rd Culvert Project:
138 17.) Update on Northeast Pond Condo Development.
139 18.) Update on Recruitment of new alternate Commission members:
140 19.) Update on status of 3.04-acre parcel (tax lot 41/81) abutting Casey Rd Conservation Land:
141 20.) Update on organizing MCC Files at Town Hall:
142 21.) Public input:
143 22.) Other Business:
144 23.) Confirm next meeting date: Wednesday, October 5, 6:00PM.
145 24.) Adjourn:

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147 Steve – motioned to adjourn at 8:03PM. Deb – seconded the motion. All were in favor; the meeting
148 adjourned at 8:03PM.
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