

Enfield Conservation Commission Meeting
April 2, 2015
Public Works Facility, Enfield

Present: Gary Gaudette, Shirley Green, Sue Hagerman, Jeanine King, Alan Strickland

Guests present: Wendy Huntley, Jerold Theis, DVM.

Chairman Strickland called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Signage for Harris Brook Recreation Area: Strickland invited Ms. Huntley to participate in a discussion regarding signage for the Harris Brook Recreation Area. Her recommended approach is for fewer restrictions on opening up the reservoir to be a recreation area. This is a natural parcel that the town owns, thus it belongs to the residents of the town. To try to make it more inviting to people, keep the wording so it garners respect of the land, with visitors viewed as stewards of the land.

Residents' concerns were reviewed: Fires, people bathing in water, bonfires, boats left in the water. Much discussion ensued with many suggestions for signage, including being proactive instead of negative, e.g., please enjoy this property for hiking, picnicking, etc. Jeanine King stated the beach sign had to specifically say no smoking. Other suggestions and comments include listing permitted uses and unpermitted uses; people who are apt to disobey probably will not read the sign; dogs should be kept on leash rather than rely on voice command; please pick up after your dog; and leave no trace. Dr. Theis states voice command does not always work, nor do shock collars. It was agreed that signage with lists of permitted and unpermitted uses might be the best approach. Huntley suggested wording such as "The Harris Brook Recreation Area has been opened to the public for general recreational use. Please be mindful of others and respect nature," then have the permitted/unpermitted lists. The thought is that once the area is open to the public and utilized it will be self policed. Also, if the police get called once or twice it will slow down any unwanted activity. Dr. Theis inquired if it is an active reservoir and was informed it has not been used for drinking water since 1983. The importance of pack in, pack out, including dog waste, was emphasized by Dr. Theis as dogs' feces and urine can pass along pathogens (canine distemper, parvovirus, etc.) and infect wildlife. Skunks, raccoons, bobcats, and foxes, among others, are susceptible to these viruses. He suggested providing education that domestic animals can pass along the virus even in urine, which unlike feces is not able to be packed out.

Strickland explained signage will be needed as the parking area is created. A driveway will go in 50 feet, then a parking area with hardtop, not asphalt, large enough for approximately 6-8 spaces. Area will not be heavily used as there are a lot of small areas around town for people to enjoy. Parking lot is on same side as trail. It is important that people have to walk directly by the sign. Strickland states there will be 2 signs. He will work on sign content and have it available for discussion at the next meeting.

Dr. Theis was invited by Shirley Green to join the Conservation Commission. He is interested in doing so and will request an appointment from the selectmen.

Review of December minutes: A motion was made by Sue Hagerman to accept the December minutes as written. This was seconded by Shirley Green and the motion was unanimously approved.

Wildlife: Strickland states there is a lot of moose activity on Colette Trail and near Lost Lake on Shaker Mountain. This has not been seen in the three years he has been in the George Hill Road area. Strickland states they change areas. Their population is declining statewide. This feels ticks are not causing moose mortality as they are attracted to stationary objects and thus go to moose after they are already down due to another process, possibly nematode/worm which causes encephalitis.

Suky Marsh: Strickland walked Suky Marsh extensively yesterday. Although not a long hike he saw a lot of deer signs, with almost every square inch covered with tracks and droppings. This area is considered a deer yard, thus a good reason for setting the area aside, and another reason to keep dogs on leashes.

Wetlands Permit Application: (Expedited review): Map#24, Lot#21, Jeffrey Kipperman. The applicant proposes to replace the stairs on the frontage of the lot leading to the docking structure. Replacement steps will be five 4'x1' granite steps that are 7" thick. The area of the bank to be impacted is 20 square feet. In addition, a 10' railing will be installed within the footprint of the stairs.

Strickland showed pictures of the proposed project located on Shaker Boulevard on Mascoma Lake. After discussion including factors such as frontage and size of current stairs, Gary Gaudette moved to approve the application, Jeanine King seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

2/26/15: Strickland/Green report on UVLТ meeting: Conservation Across Borders: Making Connections

Strickland would like to do vernal pool mapping for town. Green states we need to decide where to do Old Home Days, possibly a hike, as we are going to go to print no later than June 15. Old Home Days is the last full weekend in July, but need to get programs and information out as early as possible.

What about ability to set up a tent at Farmer's Market? Jeanine King states there is usually space available for one community booth. Potentially could highlight fern identification, vernal pools, some other type of an exhibit, or different wild foods such as mustard greens.

What works well with community projects of other conservation commissions is if members have a passion, they should embrace it. For example, Green is working on water quality, taking on the reservoir. Another possibility is to work with Boy/Girl Scouts and do orienteering course, having fun with map and compass. Per Strickland, the UVLТ speaker said conservation commissions have the opportunity to shape a town's future and control its environmental destiny.

Old Business:

Harris Brook Recreation Area: Signage at Harris Brook (see above). No news on other parking area bids. Kurt Gotthard called and recommended Bill Warner, from Canaan, to give a bid on the Harris Brook parking area. Strickland called 3/30/15 to set up time to view the sight. 4/1/15, Strickland met with Warner on site. Warner will have bid estimate in soon.

Within the next few weeks we will have both bids and at the next meeting will be able to choose. One bid is less than \$5,000, so there are sufficient funds.

Budget: Balance of unspent dollars from 2014 budget (\$949.28) was deposited into the Conservation Fund, which is now **\$17,756.33**

Intent to Cut: Hackenman, Map#9. Lot#74-5, 74-6/////Hackeman Map#25, Lot#003

Strickland states we can't look at it, can't get on property.

Green asked by Strickland about progress on water study. Will update our proposal, fine tune it more. He will work with and advise Green. She will keep Commission informed.

New Business: New trail around pond at Harris Brook? Too early right now, maybe at next meeting.

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 1, at 7 p.m.

A motion was made by Gary Gaudette to adjourn. This was seconded by Jeanine King and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Gillen

April 3, 2015