

CONSERVATION COMMISSION WORKSHOP MINUTES THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2022

Attendees: Irit Levy, John Recine, Becca & Charles Hastings, Jennie Lucas, Mark DeCoteau (Town Manager)

The workshop was called to order at 3:01pm by chair, Irit Levy.

Irit said that Kristen Taylor has resigned from the Conservation Commission (CC), so we will need to recruit new members and find a replacement for Kristen's secretary role.

Irit explained the main reason for this workshop was to discuss the Land Acknowledgement (LA) statement that John Recine proposed on behalf of the CC to the Planning Board (PB) for inclusion in the Master Plan. Certain members of the PB objected to the wording of the LA, so we need to discuss next steps.

Charles voiced concern that a blurb about the LA was published in the June WigWag and thought we should avoid measures that might provoke resentments with the PB. Irit said she has been fielding questions from residents who have heard about it, so thought it was appropriate to mention it to a larger town audience so they are aware that it is being discussed.

The wording that is objected to in the LA is the phrase "past and present", with "present" being the real issue. Irit's concern is that removing that word hints at erasure.

Charles read one version of PSU's land acknowledgement and discussed how it compared to the one being considered by the CC.

Charles cautioned against overreliance on the native trail/road map because we don't know the sources or the credibility of the cartologist.

Charles read a passage that the Historic Society is considering for adoption regarding the indigenous heritage of the region.

Becca asked if the CC could present to the PB directly. There was agreement that this would be a great idea to read it, explain it, pronounce the words. Irit stressed the importance of doing this in person rather than over Zoom.

It was agreed that LAs are becoming ubiquitous, and that the concise version that we have put forward is preferable to a longer one. Although we didn't take a vote, there is unanimous agreement to the wording of our LA as is: It is a general choice of the INHCC – Indigenous NH Collaborative Collective:

"We are located on N'dakinna, which is the traditional ancestral homeland of the Abenaki, Pennacook, and Wabanaki Peoples, past and present. We acknowledge and honor with gratitude the land and waterways and the alnobak (people) who have stewarded N'dakinna throughout the generations."

Brief discussion on where would we use the LA – start CC meetings with it? Use it as a header or footer in CC emails?

Mark reminded us that we need to be sure not to use "Town of Waterville Valley" when referencing the LA because it is not (at this point) something the Town is considering adopting, but rather just the CC. He also advised that we need to understand how this LA ties into our statutory duties as a CC. Irit explained that as current stewards of the Town's natural resources, it is appropriate to acknowledge the indigenous people who have stewarded these resources throughout time.

John asked what we think of the PB members objection to the current LA as being “too political”. The CC is unanimous in not understanding what they mean, exactly, and we should ask them to explain their reasoning.

Irit explained that if after bringing it to the PB again, they don't agree to add it to the Master Plan, we could bring it to Town Meeting for adoption. Mark said there are two paths for that, either the Selectboard can present it as a warrant article, or if they choose not to, then we could do a citizens' petition.

John said the next PB meeting where the LA will be discussed is 7/14. John will ask Wendi if a presentation by the CC could be on the agenda.

Other business: Irit reported that Rick V. said the Snow's Brook mitigation project looks good. He made a confirmation of approx. 51 acres of old growth forest when he was here doing his field work!

The next CC meeting is set for June 28 at 3pm.

The workshop was adjourned at 3:45pm.

Minutes prepared by Jennie Lucas.