

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
AUGUST 30, 2022
3PM TOWN SQUARE MEETING ROOM

The meeting was called to order at 3:01pm

Attendees: Irit Levy, Chair; John Recine, ex-officio; Jennie Lucas; Charles and Rebecca Hastings; Cyndy Piekos, alternate; Mark DeCoteau, Town Manager; Steve Royer, Town Administrator.

There was no update at this time from Rick Van de Poll on the Snows Brook Mitigation Project.

The minutes from the July 26, 2022 meeting were approved unanimously.

Privilege of the floor:

- Section 5.5 of the proposed Master Plan was read aloud as follows:

Native Americans, collectively later known as the Abenaki, almost certainly hunted, fished, and generally stewarded the land now known as Waterville Valley for thousands of years. Although no archeological or documentary evidence of Abenaki settlements has yet been found in Waterville Valley, there was likely a trail through the valley linking Abenaki settlements in the Holderness/Plymouth area to those in the Conway area.

Old Business:

- It was agreed that our next meeting will be an October site walk of the conservation parcel (lot 32C) and we will discuss at that time whether or not we feel it's necessary to have the lot surveyed. Irit has been in touch with one surveyor, and she will ask to be put on their list for 2023, just in case.
- Mark gave an update on the West Branch Rd. water line project. It is still on target to be finished this fall. The only minor challenge has been excavating some extremely large boulders from the pipelaying path.
- Becca presented the final version of our logo – everyone agreed keeping the colors to white, blue and green would be best.

New Business:

- Water conservation/drought – We are still in the “abnormally dry” category, but very close to tipping into the “minor drought” category. Our

wells are down a little bit, but nothing to worry about at this point. This topic is a permanent item on the Selectboard meeting agenda and the next report will be on 9/14 to them. Irit suggested we somehow encourage residents to conserve water year-round, whether or not we are officially in a drought. Mark and other members of the commission worried that might amount to “crying wolf” and then when we really need conservation, people will be less inclined to listen. However, a volunteer conservation message may be posted to the town’s website.

It is within the purview of the ConComm to make recommendations to the selectboard for water conservation measures, if we choose, such as, metered water for commercial use.

- Increasing annual funding – we had mistakenly thought our current budget was \$400, but it is actually \$2000, so no increase in annual funding is expected at this time.
- Beaver control – Jennie reported that she was dismayed the ConComm was not part of the discussion with the recent beaver eradication near Well #4. Mark outlined the process that took place including discussions with various personnel within and approvals received from the Forest Service, and then he notified the Selectboard. He suggested we bring this matter to the attention of the Selectboard if we wish to be brought into discussions like this in the future. Jennie will follow up.
- Dalton ConComm requested support for veto override of HB1454 – Irit read a draft of a support letter. Rebecca read Sununu’s veto explanation letter. Charles thinks this might not be something that we, as a Commission, should be involved in, since it is not a matter within Waterville Valley. Various other commissioners felt differently and think that some conservation matters being discussed at the state level are the responsibility of all of the ConComms in the state. Also, doing a favor for a neighboring community is the “right thing to do.” Jennie motioned to approve sending a letter of support, pending minor edits; the motion carried unanimously.

The date of our next meeting was set for Tuesday, October 18, 2022 at 3pm. It will be a site walk of lot 32C.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:39pm.

“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.”