

Chair Sam Demeritt opened the meeting at 7:01 PM. Other members in attendance were Debra Kimball, Cheryl Smith, Susan Mooney and Raelene Shippee-Rice, alternate, who was seated for Krystal Costa's position. Guest was Katrina Amaral, Executive Director for Bear-Paw Regional Greenways (BPRG) land trust.

Attendees were introduced, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements: Breakfast in the Barn, an annual BPRG fundraiser, will be held on May 2 at the Kitts Farm in Strafford, NH. The event is free; however, attendees are encouraged to make a donation.

Note: Demeritt, Smith and Mooney attended the Budget Committee Meeting on February 6 in order to provide information toward a proposed Petition Warrant Article that, if passed, would remove the major source of revenue for the town's Conservation Fund. A handout was provided to the Committee members which outlined the history of the Conservation Fund and how these monies have assisted landowners to place a total of over 1000 acres into land protection conservation easements. This presentation and discussion were only to provide information to the Committee and the public. The handout is attached and is on file.

William E. Kennard Forest: This town owned parcel of over 30 acres is owned by the town of Nottingham. BPRG holds the conservation easement deed for the property. The Trails Committee (NTC) has been designing a trail for public use and Ms. Amaral was contacted by Celia Abrams, an active member of the Committee. Ms. Amaral stated that the project does require a Stewardship Plan which details the trail system, an informational kiosk, and any other impacts to the property. She suggested that Ellen Snyder, IBIS Consulting, be contacted to provide an RFP for Plan development.

Another potential project was discussed with the Commission, a high value habitat that totals over 250 acres. Ms. Amaral noted that this potential project would qualify for state funding through the Aquatic Resource Management Fund (ARM Fund) and that she would be willing to initiate contact with the property owners. As is usual with out of town conservation grants, the town will be responsible for matching funds to indicate town interest for land protection of this parcel. The Conservation Fund with revenue from the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) provides these matching funds on behalf of the town for projects such as these.

Ms. Amaral left the meeting at 7:23 PM.

Trails Committee: The last meeting was held on February 6. There is a trail work session tentatively scheduled for Saturday, February 15, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM, to remove debris from the town office trail located to the back (east) of the athletic field. The next NTC meeting is scheduled for March 5, at 6:30 PM in Conference Room 2 in the Municipal Office Complex (Community Center).

Correspondence:

- A Thank You from the Recreation Department for the Commission's participation at Earth Fest last September.

- Received from Arianna Spear, Conservation and Stewardship Manager, Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD), two conservation easement monitoring reports for 2019: (1) Blaisdell properties located on Cilley Road Map 74, Lots 2, 3, 3-1 totaling 130+/- acres; (2) Town-owned property at Brook Crossing housing development, Map 5, Lot 10 and Map 6, Lot 20, accessed along Old Turnpike Road (NH Route 4), a total of 55.33 acres located in the Little River Watershed. Both properties were satisfactory.
- Received from Stacie Powers, The Society for the Protection of NH Forests, a conservation easement monitoring report for the Helen Fernald property, Map 52, Lot 4-1, along Deerfield Road. The property was satisfactory.
- Date 1-23-20, from Joseph Foley, Lamprey River Advisory Committee (LRAC) Chair, to Mr. Craig Day, NH DES, cc-ed to the Commission, a document re: 26 Tuckaway Shores Road that is subject to review. The parcel is known as Map 70, Lot 51, File # 2020-00020. The document indicated that the proposed project would include the construction of a new garage, mudroom and covered porch, all improvements would be located within the woodland buffer. Additional improvements would involve upgrading the septic system and paving the driveway. My Day indicated the slope was quite steep in that area (but did not provide any slope calculations).
- Date 1-22-20, from DES Wetlands Bureau, cc-ed to the Commission, to Ronald Zabloudil of 72 Stevens Hill Road, Map 46, Lot 5-2, File # 2019-03763, a Request for Additional Information within 60 days.

Minutes: The minutes of January 13, 2020 were reviewed and edited. Kimball moved to accept the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Smith. All five (5) votes were in favor.

Other: The members discussed a petition warrant article scheduled to be voted on at Town Meeting, March 14, that would remove the major source of funding for the Conservation Fund. Strategies were discussed and tasks were assumed. Members decided to schedule a workshop meeting for Monday, March 2, 2020, at 6:30 PM in Room #2. Demeritt will be responsible for the posting.
Shippee-Rice left at 9:04 PM.

Adjournment: It was moved by Kimball and seconded by Mooney to adjourn the meeting. All four (4) votes were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan P. Mooney, Secretary

These minutes were accepted as read at the meeting held on March 9, 2020.

NCC LUCT and Conservation Fund Handout for Budget Committee

Approved at the 2004 Town Meeting, and in effect since 2005, over 1000 (1004.5) acres of open space have been permanently protected with conservation easements by landowners who have asked for financial assistance from Nottingham's Conservation Fund. The Fund uses only Land Use Change tax (LUCT) monies, not a penny of our property tax dollars. A conservation easement is like permanent current use status so that the land is only taxed for its present use, a levy far below what the tax bill would be for potential house lots.

This additional one thousand acres of raw (open) land is conservatively valued at \$6000 per acre, a total value of \$6,000,000. In most cases, the Fund allowed the leverage of additional matching dollars from other funds and gifts resulting in **a total outlay to date from the Fund of (approximately) \$851,000 or \$851.68 per acre conserved, a mere fraction of the \$6000 per acre value.**

At the 2006 Town Meeting, residents overwhelmingly voted to support a nonbinding resolution establishing the Four Generals Greenway vision, a completely volunteer initiative to encourage property owners to protect our forested lands, farmlands, large land blocks and their connecting areas, wetlands and aquifer recharge zones. The Greenway also encourages the protection of smaller habitats and sensitive areas (vernal pools, critical wetlands and uplands) that have high value for property owners and the community.

- Twelve (12) conservation easement projects completed using Fund monies since 2005, the smallest an eight (8) acre parcel along the North River to a forested 224 acre parcel in a large land block.
- Five (5) projects not completed and abandoned, the two smallest were 19+/- and 26 +/- acres of farmland for a total of 834 acres. (One parcel of 150+ acres was subsequently developed.)
- In preliminary discussions, three (3) projects totaling approximately 325 +/- acres.

Our community is wise to overwhelmingly value conservation land and stewardship of the LUCT.

It protects our rural character, and conserved land does not carry the same ongoing and increasing expense to our general fund that a developed parcel does. This includes the costs of road maintenance (culverts, paving, grading and fill), sand and salt treatment, police and fire, and school (the largest expense).

Additionally, ecological services that the protected soil, forest, wildlife, and farmland offer to a community are not valued such as free drinking water, insect control, and free recreational areas for physical and emotional benefits **are only now being quantified as a societal benefit, and not necessarily traded on the free market.** These ecosystem functions give rise to intermediate and final services which benefit humans in many ways.

The direct benefits for humans include material inputs for production (e.g., timber), life support (e.g., clean water and water), and amenity values (e.g., recreation) (Champ et al. 2003).