



Mason Conservation Commission Minutes – D R A F T

April 9, 2014

7:00 pm to 11:00 pm

In Attendance

- Bob Dillberger
- Liz Fletcher
- Bob Larochele
- Barbara Devore
- Ann Moser
- Anna Faiello

Voted unanimously to accept Mar. minutes.

Liz mentioned she'd been approached by the owners of C27 who are interested in donating the land to the town for conservation. Given the parcel is adjacent to the Bronson Potter land, we're very interested and will certainly pursue this generous offer.

Met with Cathy Schwenk regarding the upcoming vascular plant survey of the north Potter parcels. Current plan is to pursue the 4-day plan proposed by the Wildflower Society to keep within Kathy's budget. This plan focuses on the Potter lands (particularly helpful when developing a management plan for this area) and 1,000 feet along Mason Brook. Kathy reports she's signed a contract for this work with the Wildflower Society. Some adjustment might be needed because some of the Mason Brook area is on private land that will require landowner permission. If we can't get permission, the survey will include additional acreage on the Potter tract instead. Because this plan is reduced in scope from the original plan, Liz moved we officially accept this revised Mason Brook Headwaters plan at a cost of \$6,760 to be donated by Cathy Schwenk (Thanks!). Passed unanimously.

Coincidentally, Joe McGuire happened by so we took the opportunity to explain to him the vascular plant survey and ask for permission to include a portion of his land, that being 100 feet on both sides of Mason Brook on parcel E69. Joe said that would be fine. However, he mentioned he currently rents the property so he must check with his tenants too.

Met with Barry Hutchins and Chuck Anderson to discuss gates at the quarry to limit illegal access. Barry's concerned that gates will limit access, particularly for handicapped folks. Liz pointed out that this land is no different than other town lands as it relates to OPDMD policy. Chuck pointed out that folks generally don't drive into the quarry anyway. They park on the RR trail and then walk in, so gating the old narrow gauge path won't help. Bob L. proposed a modified plan with gates at the access point off Coyne Lane and the access road off Scripps Lane but not at the narrow-gauge entrance. Also briefly discussed proposed quarry rules which are dragging as we wait for the legal OK. Barry noted that **without this ordinance, the police have very limited enforcement authority** beyond regulations that apply to all town-owned land. He said it's important to get this done ASAP with the recreational season about to start. During the discussion, it came up that the proposed policy to limit access to town residents could generate conflict with snowmobile use; the "quarry loop" snowmobile trail is popular. Barry suggested we move ahead with the proposed policy as written, given that it's been vetted by Martha Jacques. Also decided to put up policy signs as landowners even though enforcement will be limited until the corresponding town ordinance is passed. (That is, we don't need to wait for an ordinance to post rules.) Agreed to post homemade signs at three entrances and the quarry listed rules related to liability. Bob L. will print some signs at 11x17 and Barbara or Liz will get them laminated.

Liz moved we pay **\$84.96 to County Stores** for paint for the new gates from the General Conservation Fund. Passed unanimously.

Received a check for \$1,311.29 from Garland Lumber Co., Inc. in partial payment for the Greenville Rd. forestry operation. Money to be deposited in the General Conservation Fund.

Received a rent check from Dennis Graham for \$1,350.00 to be deposited in the Old Ashby Road Fund.

Anna volunteered to coordinate the annual roadside cleanup with Charlie Lanni. Liz will contact Shaw's to get a dumpster to hold the trash.

Ann brought up the plan for a quarry clean-up day. May 10 is the proposed day. We need to contact Barry Hutchins and Dave Baker to let them know. CC will supply trash bags. Will need ropes, winches, and chain saws. Bob and Bob volunteered to go take a close look at what's in the quarry itself (Sat. 4/12 at 11 AM) and in the nearby area so we know exactly what we need.

Barbara related a conversation she had with Ian McSweeney about Russell Foundation financial help with the quarry project. She learned that the Russell Foundation contributed money to pay the salary of Forest Society personnel who visited the quarry during the easement process. Liz will draft a thank-you letter for their support.

On the topic of management plans, Barbara reported that John Nute (NHCES forester) will prepare a forest management plan for our Potter lands at no charge. She also has heard of a similar service related to wildlife available in this area, and will pursue this option. She also knows of someone in town who's a trained geologist and is willing to help with this project. Regarding the Greenville Rd. view cutting, discussed what to do with the riprap left over near the road. Decided we'll just leave it where it is. Also discussed freshly cut area closest to Greenville Road (about 2 acres) that could be converted to hay production. Bill Downs suggested maintaining it in scrub as rabbit/grouse/woodcock habitat which is in short supply in NH. Depending on the cost, a good plan seems to be to prep the cut area closest to the road for hay production, creating brush piles from the slash downhill of this area, and maintain some of the other cut areas further back as wildlife habitat. Bill Downs said the logger will run a York rake after things have dried out. Eric Anderson was present at the April 5 site visit and offered to clean up the roughly 1 acre of existing hayfield south of Old Brookline Road that was littered with woody debris left by the logging operation. We agreed that Eric would do a much better job with his Harley rake than the loggers could do with a York rake. We'll ask him for a quote on this job and also on converting to hayfield the freshly cut area closest to Greenville Road. The money already received from Garland Lumber can go to the Harley rake job. Further income is expected from Garland.

Knotweed: Barbara has been in contact with Lee Gillman (licensed herbicide applicator) about chemical control. Lee needs to know square footage and frontage of areas to treat to prepare an estimate. Best time to apply herbicide is August so we'll pursue this task a bit later in the summer.

Discussed briefly the lack of MCC financial statements. We've seen nothing after Sep. 2013 so we don't know how much money is in our accounts. Perhaps we should contact the fund underwriters directly?

Barbara presented information from Ian McSweeney about K52; prospective buyer is interested in conservation easement that permits farming. Ian said he'd be happy to help us make this happen.

Next drug take-back day: April 26 at Mason Police Department from 10:00 until 2:00.