**Conservation Commission**

**Meeting Minutes of**

**November 18, 2020**

**PRESENT**: Tim Lovell, Jim Wilkinson, Steve Ungerer, Neil Reardon and Brent Ebner

Mr. Lovell called the meeting to order at 7PM

**Minutes**

Mr. Lovell made a motion to accept the amended meeting minutes of October 21, 2020. Mr. Steve Ungerer seconded the motion.. Vote: 5-0.

**Visitor Comments**

Mr. Guthrie asked if the agenda was posted. Mr. Lovell said that he prepares the agenda right before the meetings and the agenda is not part of the minutes.

**Mr. Lynch**

Mr. Lynch introduced himself and advised that he is interested in being a member of the Conservation Commission. He has been a resident of the town for 15 years. He is interested in the outdoors and walks throughout the town forest. He has been a park ranger in Concord, Mass. Mr. Lynch would like to give back to the community. Mr. Lynch was advised that he should meet the Board of Selectmen at its next meeting.

Mr. Lovell made a motion to approve Mr. Lynch joining the Commission as a member. Mr. Ebner seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Lynch will meet with the Board of Selectmen who are responsible for appointing new members.

**Nextrek bench**

Ms. Cote provided an update regarding the plastics collection. She has enough for the bench for conservation land and is now working on another one. Ms. Cote asked what color the commission would like the bench to be and the Commission agreed with Ms. Cote’s choice. They discussed making a pad for the bench to anchor it down properly.

**Carl Schumacher**

Mr. Schumacher brought up the topic of the parking area off of Hadley Road. He again asked why it was discussed in a non-public session. Mr. Schmacher said that he and his family often use the trails. However he feels as though their voices are grossly ignored. He again asked for the petition with 200 signatures. Mr. Lovell said that he no longer has that. He threw away the signatures because it was in support of a gift from the developer to construct a parking lot and the developer decided to install a waterline instead. Mr. Lovell said that the commission is trying to service 9000 residents and not just a few people. The parking lot had been discussed over the last 2 years. Other parking lots around town have been enlarged to accommodate the increase in parking. He also gave an example of other maintenance such as the opening up the fields for historic reasons. Mr. Schmacher said that this is a remote parking area. Mr. Lovell said that he could see an employee of the Town very clearly when he was at the cul-de-sac and the employee was in the parking lot area, this is not a remote site.

Mr. Schmacher reiterated his concern about seeking public input. Mr. Schmacher also has signatures from 56 residents. He again mentioned that he found alcohol in the area and Mr. Lovell said that during the town-wide clean ups that is what you find all over town. Mr. Ebner said that the parking lot was discussed in 2018 and 2019. Mr. Lovell said that he wrote to Paul Carideo, the previous Planning Board Chairman who referred the parking lot inquiry to Steve Wentworth, the current Chairman, who then referred it to the Town’s engineer. The Town engineer met Mr. Lovell on site. A number of sites had been reviewed in the past, to check into the availably to access the Conservation land. The sites were either too expensive and/or the topography was such that a parking lot couldn’t be installed. In the past, the Grimms and the Cotes have been present to express their concern with the construction of the parking lot. The Commission listened to their concerns but there weren’t any other options. Mr. Lovell gave examples of Kelly Brook, Central Street, Starwood Drive and Golden Meadow of areas where the commission considered installing a parking area. Mr. Lovell also provided a photograph of excessive parking that was taking place at the end of cul-de-sacs,. Mr. Schmacher said that when this is discussed in nonpublic there is no opportunity for people to voice their concerns. Mr. Lovell said that people have been voicing their concerns for the last two years.

There was a brief discussion concerning the deliberative session. Mr. Reardon said that he was concerned with the personal attacks that were waged against the commission member(s) at the deliberative session. Name calling is unethical and there is no basis for it.

Mr. Lovell read the legal opinion. from NHMA, which stated that the Commission can do what they want with the land. Mr. Lovell reminded everyone that access needs to be made for emergency vehicles to the backland off of Hadley. The Commission has specific legislative powers. If the project was more complex than this, he would than go before other boards. There had been a discussion about the Hadley Parking lot in 2018 and it was going to cost between $40K and 50K.

Mr. Reardon encouraged people to join the commission.

A resident of 31 Pentucket brought up the topic of a nonpublic session. Mr. Lovell said the project was discussed on a site walk. While the members walk around a site they often discuss other topics. The resident would like the meeting minutes on the website. He was advised that they would be posted.

There was a discussion on the Right to Know law.

Mr. Guthrie said that he believes that the Commission wants residents’ input. There has been great work on the trails. Mr. Guthrie said that the Commission isn’t completely autonomous because they have to work within their operating budget. Mr. Lovell added that a parking lot was discussed at the same time a cell tower was being discussed and this was in 2018,

Mr. Lovell offer to unseal the meeting minutes of the non-public session and release any records which are not protected under the Right to Know law.

Mr. Guthrie said that he spoke with the Police Chief and the Chief is fine with a parking lot at the end of Hadley rather than at the end of the cul-de-sac.

**ATVs Sandy Point**

In the past, boats have pulled up to the sandy bar and eroded the area. It has also been destroyed by the ATVs. This was an issue several years ago. The ATV operators were given warnings. Mr. Ebner asked if it was worth setting up a game camera. He was advised that there is no place to put it and it may get destroyed. However, if people take photos and give those to the Police Department that might be a way to stop it.

**Maps update**

Mr. Wilkinson had maps to distribute. The first 100 maps have been donated. There will be several posted signs showing people where they are in relationship to the trail system.

Mr. Lovell made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reardon. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 8:20 PM.

The next meeting will be held on January 20, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sally Theriault