

MINUTES

Sanbornton Conservation Commission

Meeting Date and Time: Thursday, February 11th 2021 at 7:00 PM

Meeting Place: Virtual only via Zoom

The meeting was called to order by Chair Brad Crosby at 7:00 PM

Present: Chair Brad Crosby, Dave Perry, Dick Ayers, Karen Boreau, Mary Ahlgren, Ray Masse

Minutes

Dick Ayers made a motion to approve the draft minutes 1/14. Mary Ahlgren seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously with votes as follows:

Crosby/Yes; Perry/Yes; Ayers/Yes; Boreau/Yes; Ahlgren/Yes; Masse/Yes

New Business

a. Discussion with Don Berry and Anna Boudreau of Lakes Region Conservation Trust –

President of LRCT Don Berry explained that the group has helped conserve 28,000 acres of land in the Lakes Region but none in Sanbornton yet. Amanda Osmer has made a lead gift through Grappone to create the Sanbornton Land Conservation Fund. The fund will help cover appraisals, surveys and other expenses that can be burdensome for a landowner looking to donate or sell their land for conservation purposes. Anna Boudreau stated that the LRCT website allows people to donate directly to this fund and will be sending a document with more information soon. She hopes to be able to share information about this at Old Home Day this year.

Mary asked who applies for the funds; Don responded that a conservation commission or forestry society would apply but not the landowner directly. He noted that there are some expenses that the fund cannot cover due to IRS rules that the landowner must pay themselves. If someone is donating an easement or the land, in order to take tax deduction the landowner needs to pay for the appraisal. If a landowner wanted to take the tax deduction and needed the appraisal but couldn't afford it, the land organization could buy the easement for a very low price which essentially gives the landowner cash to pay for the appraisal. Ray asked if there are occasions where the local commission and LRCT would each chip in on a conservation easement/purchase; Don responded Yes. Karen asked if there are any areas of interest yet for the LRCT in Sanbornton; Don responded that they do have some maps they have looked at but will be researching this more.

b. Black Brook/Trout Unlimited – Chair Crosby explained that the work should begin in the spring to improve the habitat quality in Black Brook, however the group is having trouble getting permission from two landowners to use their property for access.

Old Business

a. School-library trail rocks – Dick will speak to Matt Swain about moving the rocks to the trailhead.

b. Land acquisition – No update on Mitiguy property. Dave explained that some of the parcels he brought up at the last meeting on Knox Mountain Rd are already under contract but there is one that connects to Knox Mountain Rd and has been on the market for 200 days; it is all slope and part of it forms a ravine. He stated that he doesn't think someone would build a house on it but it could potentially be logged. The land would form a corridor with the Army Corps property. Chair Crosby asked if he should mention this parcel to LRCT and members agreed that he

should. Ray and Chair Crosby walked the 7/10-acre parcel on Rt 132 mentioned at last meeting; the Commission agreed it's not worth pursuing for conservation.

c. Trail update – Ray has printed more maps and Dave put them in the kiosk at the Eastman Hill trails. Dave noted that the bottom access on Plummer Rd was not plowed; Chair Crosby will mention this to Highway Department Director Johnny Van Tassel.

d. Newsletter – Topics for the next newsletter include current use, looking for members, and the new Sanbornton Land Conservation Fund.

Other Business

a. Membership - Chair Crosby stated that Doug Sarette has resigned from the Commission. There is now an opening for a member and an alternate.

b. Shoreline permits – Ray asked about shoreline permits; if the Conservation Commission does not sign off on an application it does not get expedited through DES and instead it can take 75 days to be approved. He thought that by having the Conservation Commission sign the permit application, the Commission waives the right to contest the State's decision. Chair Crosby stated that he thought the expedited applications do not receive a thorough review by DES. Ray will look into this further.

c. Wildlife corridor mapping – Karen will be mapping wildlife travel now that there is snow and comparing with last year's findings.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 11th at 7:00 and will be virtual only.

Respectfully submitted,
Audry Barriault