

JOHNSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 14, 2019

Present: Lois Frey, Sue Lovering, Dean Locke, Noel Dodge, Denise Krause, Jackie Stanton, Jared Jasinski, Eric Nuse

Absent: Hillary Emick

Guests: Kelly Vandorn, Jacob Vandorn

Additions to the agenda: Lois added discussion about a game camera.

The April minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Expenditures in the last month included pizza for the high school kids who worked at Beard's and Eric's AVCC course. Our balance is 3341.32.

A motion was passed to renew the \$50 membership in the Association for Vermont Conservation Commissions. Coming up will be the materials for the path at Beard's and payment for professional treatment to eradicate the knotweed at Beard's and Journey's End.

There is \$2500 in the Conservation Reserve Fund.

TRUST FOR PUBLIC LANDS

The Selectboard approved the acquisition of 49.6 acres of land that the state wants to buy and conserve in order to protect an important section of wildlife corridor and a piece of the Long Trail. The purchase is being handled and partially funded by the Trust for Public Land and the Green Mountain Club.

It's not known at this time if a contiguous parcel in Waterville has been approved as well.

CONSERVATION RESERVE FUND

About 40 surveys have been returned to Dean, who reports that the great majority of respondents would donate to a reserve fund and/or approve a tax to raise funds. There's a variation in how much of a tax people would support.

Almost all are in favor of managing urban sprawl and protecting wildlife, clean water, and forest habitat.

Dean will bring the surveys with their data itemized to the next meeting.

JOURNEY'S END

Journey's End site steward Jackie checked out a Front Porch Forum post that complained of broken glass at the firepit. She picked up most of the shards but said that swimmers should wear shoes in that area and in the water. Apparently the throwing of bottles with wild abandon is a yearly event and one that we'd like to stop.

Lydia Menendez will hang a new sign at the trailhead on Friday, the 17th.

INVASIVE PLANTS

Sue coordinated a successful and fun day with Chris Whitlock's science class on May 1 at Beard's to cut and burn a heavy infestation of bush honeysuckle and barberry. Lois, Sue, Jared and Jacob worked with them to cut it, burn the stumps with flamethrowers to prevent regeneration, tend a bonfire on the riverside, and eat pizza for lunch at the picnic tables. Discussion about invasives and the harm they do was had with the kids. Under all the brush, we found tiny fir and apple seedlings, a small patch of trout lilies, two or three false hellebores, and a few cardamine, which will all have a chance to grow now. We'll plan to return in two weeks to

re-burn the stumps to ensure that they're dead. Beaver activity was evident in the cutting of a clump of small ash that was one of the few worthwhile plants along the river. The kids were so enthused that they want to spend another day working with us before school lets out. It was suggested that they help cut knotweed at Journey's End in June. Once they found out there's a swimming hole, the job was a shoo-in.

BEARD'S RECREATION PARK

Noah Pollack has a team ready to begin the new path at Beard's and Eric will find out if they need anything from us. They will need fill from the town. We haven't seen the River Conservancy's grant or the plan yet; both should be forthcoming by the end of the month.

Jared expressed concern that the path have a natural, attractive look, like it belongs in the landscape. We all agreed and discussed whether that should be a requirement for any project going forward.

Lydia has signage for the perk and will install it on May 17th.

Redstart Environmental hasn't yet come to give an estimate on spraying knotweed at Journey's End and Beard's but promises to do so within a month. Their protocol is to cut the knotweed in July so they can spray the weakened regrowth in August. We will need to re-treat it in two years and again in five years. There is no guarantee that it will be totally dead, but it will be set back to a manageable level. Sue has sent maps and will walk the sites with them.

COMMUNITY VALUES MAPPING

Eric presented the survey/mapping project to the Planning Commission, who unanimously voted to work with us on it in September. Although we stated that we'd prefer the Planning Commission take the lead on it, it looks like that job will fall to us. Lois suggested that we invite Jens, Monica, and the PC to our September meeting to talk about running a trial run mock survey session for training.

TUESDAY NIGHT LIVE

It's a go this summer and will begin on July 9. During the summer, our meetings will be on Thursday, July 11 and Thursday, August 8.

We'll compile a list of topics to present at our display for each of the concerts and have them at the June meeting. in a clump of ash that was one of the few native trees along the river.

Denise suggested doing one on birds.

GAME CAMERA

Nat Kinney has offered us an older game camera and we have accepted his generous offer. Noel says let's point it at the JE campfire and find out who's breaking all that glass.

MISC:

- Jared is experimenting with ground up dead knotweed stalks as a food additive. (Most folks would go for chocolate.)
- Beavers are pretty dumb when they're cutting down the ash and leaving the bush honeysuckle.
- Thanks, Dean, for lending his propane tank for the honeysuckle slaughter and for the key lime pie bites, not necessarily in that order.
- Sue, Jackie, and Denise will begin inventorying wildflowers and trees at Journey's End for the nature trail.

- Jacob took a swell photo of the whole group for the Facebook page.

TO-DO LIST:

- Everyone will think up topics to present at TNL.
- Sue will coordinate Redstart's visit to Beard's and Journey's End to get an estimate for spraying.
- Sue, Denise, and Jackie will start an inventory. Sue will email with a Monday or Wednesday evening date.
- Eric will invite Jens, Monica, and the Planning Commission to the September meeting.
- Dean will bring the survey data to the June meeting.

Adjourned at 8:35.

Next meeting is at the Library at 6:45 on June 11.

Submitted by Sue Lovering, Secretary.

DRAFT