

JOHNSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 20, 2016

Present: Lois Frey, Sue Lovering, Noel Dodge, Eric Nuse, Louise von Weis, Laura Branca, Ann Marie Bahr, Denise Krause. Absent: Dean Locke. Guests: Doug and Linda Molde, Noah Pollack.

The November minutes were approved.

PARTY TIME!

The CC is good at lots of things and one of them is throwing a darn fine party! We had a potluck extraordinaire with swell food that ranged from embellished salads to kielbasa in barbecue sauce to deer balls to cookies to exotic chicken to a Klingon-inspired creation of black bean and peanuts, among others. There were poinsettia plates and wine and Santa hats and conversation and good cheer. The only thing missing was Dean. (Jeezum Crow, Dean, did you forget to take your ginkgo biloba that morning or what???)

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY UPDATE

The grant grantors won't allow an extension of our deadline; bad news for work that's moving along at the pace of a molasses flow in January. We have until May 31 to finish it. Arrowwood has done no off-road work as of this meeting. As a result of the slow going, the final result will be lacking in on-the-ground details like wetlands and flora.

Denise will send out the final letter to be sent to parcel-holders and asks that when we send her the assents to please include the appropriate parcel number.

Lois had a "no" answer for surveying a parcel along Rt. 15. Huh. See if they get invited to our next party.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VERMONT TRAILS

Eric sent out an informative report.

VERMONT TRAILS AND GREENWAYS COUNCIL

In October we voted to become a member of VTGC in January. Meanwhile, thanks to Doug Molde, the Select Board voted to join as a municipality, so in effect, we're already there. Doug suggested that we add the Rail Trail to our roster of trails and make Johnson the place "where trails meet."

GREEN UP DAY

Yay Laura!! She volunteered to be the new coordinator, aka the Green Up Guru, for Green Up Day. The CC will back her up and provide much-needed help. JCC paid for signs in the past; we need to locate them. Got a different idea for GU activities? Bring it to the next meeting.

McCUIN ISLAND

A lengthy and lively discussion was held about acquiring McCuin Island for conservation. Representing the Vermont River Conservancy, Noah Pollack referred to it as “real conservation value” and proposed that the CC and/or the town raise funds/donate money to buy the island from the McCuin estate and transfer it to the town or state. It is assessed at \$7000; the VRC plans to have it reassessed. This is a multifaceted plan that has inspired some dissension. Stay tuned.

NATURAL RESOURCE WALKS

We'll make decisions in January and set dates in February.

JOURNEY'S END BRIDGE

Oh boy! Bridge building! Lois has a picture of the desired bridge and the 2015 estimate for materials; that is +/- \$1200. Noel informed us that we don't need a permit but that the Vermont Rivers Program will come to look at the site, give advice, and give a formal you-don't-need-a-permit okay. A recreation facilities grant, requiring a 50/50 match may be available.

ENERGY PLAN

Lois and Sue attended an informational meeting about Act 147, which regards energy planning strategies by the town. Acting on the Act will dovetail nicely with our Natural Resource Inventory goal.

BUDGET

We need a treasurer and Ann Marie volunteered. Thanks, Ann Marie!

We agreed to ask for \$1500 this year, the same as last year. It was suggested that we ask for more in order to create a fund for future grant matches and conservation projects but it was decided to put that on hold and work to make a case to the public to raise a conservation fund. How to structure that fund is the question; Eric will look into it. We'll lay the foundation for more funds over the next year.

MISC:

- A word of advice from the CC: don't eat before the meeting.
- It's a lousy year for beechnuts, which are only abundant every four to five years.
- Doug is a great cook!
- The VRC included Beard's Recreation Park in their 2016 highlights.
- Denise refuses to wear a Santa hat.
- This place is awful quiet when Dean stays home. Did I mention he forgot the party??

Adjourned at 9:15.

The next meeting is at the Library at 6:30 on Tuesday, January 17, 2017

Submitted by Sue Lovering, Secretary