

JOHNSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
JANUARY 19, 2016
MINUTES

Present: Lois Frey, Sue Lovering, Eric Nuse, Noel Dodge, Louise von Wiese, Dean Locke, Laura Branca. Absent: Ann Marie Bahr. Guest: Denise Krause

The December minutes were approved.

EMERALD ASH BORER VIDEOS

They're swell! Sue showed the first two PSAs that have been created by the Regional Invasive Insect Preparedness Team through a grant from the Urban and Community Forestry program. Lois and Sue star in them, so how can they miss? Everybody laughed, which is the reaction RIIPT is looking for.

ANNUAL REPORT REVIEW

Lois wrote it and everybody approved. Catch it in the Town Report.

LEASH LAW ORDINANCE REVIEW

Laura tweaked her draft of the new Leash Law by adding a section on disturbances and nuisances. In the hiking section, restrictions on having dogs off-leash were added for deer wintering areas. She'll write the ordinance and send it to us, then it'll be sent to the Select Board.

We have particular concerns about disturbances of any kind in or near deeryards. Laura suggested putting some information out on Front Porch Forum and also offered to hang signs at Journey's End, Prindle, Prospect Rock and the Talc Mill property that say 'This is a deeryard; take care with dogs'.

Congrats, Laura! Great job!

NATURAL RESOURCE GRANT

Surprise, surprise, the inventory has to go out to bid to three or four other firms, though Arrowwood will probably be the ones doing our work. Lois will ask Lea who we should send to and get an idea of the timeline involved. We need to be ready to start before spring, as we'll go through two budget years.

Noel reminds us that once we have the information compiled on the inventory, we need to coordinate with the state and get it onto the ANR's database.

NATURAL RESOURCE SECTION OF TOWN PLAN

Some of the LANDS publications may be included in the Town Plan. Noel will look at wording for deeryard and bear habitat guidelines and will send them to Lea and cc Lois.

ANIMAL TRACKING INITIATIVE

Eric has decided that we should hold one or two tracking seminars in this, our first year. We can test protocols and educate folks to go out and practice in places of their choice. We'll see what kind of interest we get and from that, we can get an idea of how to proceed more scientifically next year.

We'll meet at Eric's on Saturday, February 20, at 10:00 for our first session. The public will be invited. Bring cookies! Hold Sunday the 21st as a weather date if needed.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Noel hasn't yet compiled the numbers. Stay tuned.

MARCH GLADNESS

We had a request from Nancy and John Haydon to present 'Edible Landscaping for People and Pollinators' on March 6. Eric will talk trout in the North Country on March 20 and Noel will do Gyrfalcons in the Yukon Delta on March 13. We'll skip Easter on the 27th and Sue will do a gardening talk on April 3. We can also show the PSAs about bugs.

Showing slides would be a lot more effective if the Library's windows could be blacked out. Sue will work up a cost estimate for blackout fabric that could be attached to the window casings with Velcro.

BUDGET

The CC has \$5629.78 in the bank; that includes the reserve fund of \$1799.81. There is a \$1500 match that will be due for the Natural Resource Inventory grant and materials for the Journey's end kiosk roof will be needed. \$1500 has been requested for the upcoming budget.

UPDATE: PADDLER'S TRAIL

The Lamoille Angler's disbanded and gave half their money to the Paddler's Trail. The PT will do some work on erosion that has occurred at the access point near Manchester's; that's probably the last thing they'll do in Johnson. They'll work on campsites in Fairfax and Cambridge this year. A fundraiser at the Landmark later in the winter is planned.

McCUIN ISLAND UPDATE

It's almost ours! The money issues have been settled and McCuin Island will be conveyed to the town. The CC will be the stewards. A 2-3 acre rare and irreplaceable natural area, the island is covered with ostrich fern, silver maple and at least one elm and is a great spot for birding. We should check it out for knotweed.

MISC:

- Johnson has one of the largest deeryards in the state.
- That weird-looking duck with the gorgeous green sheen on the Gihon is an Indian Black Duck. Thanks, Louise, for that information.

- Eric will follow up with Cal Stanton about building a kiosk for Prindle and about the JE kiosk roof.
- RIIPPT has to have two ash inventories done by May. Louise, Eric and Denise offered to help out. Thanks!!
- Denise proved to be up to the challenge of snarky comments and loud laffs the CC is so good at; it seems she's a kindred spirit. She may decide to join us! It was a pleasure having her. She said, "It was the most fun I've had in months!"
- Gingersnaps with lemon cream filling...an inspired choice, Lois!

Adjourned at 8:35

Submitted by Sue Lovering, Secretary