

JOHNSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 12, 2017

Present: Lois Frey, Sue Lovering, Noel Dodge, Dean Locke, Laura Branca, Louise von Weise, Denise Ashman Krause

Absent: Ann Marie Bahr

Guests: Nat Kinney, Doug Molde

The August minutes were approved.

JOURNEY'S END BRIDGE

The materials are ordered and the site work is done. The rocks will be delivered.

Regarding the celebratory party, Lois has issued an edict: "We will not have red hot dogs."

CONSERVATION FUND

Discussion was begun about establishing a dedicated reserve fund that will be used for acquiring property for conservation, buying easements, and helping wildlife. It would exist apart from our regular allocation from the town. Eric is taking the lead on this and pointed out that it needs to go through a formal process, beginning with asking the Select Board to put it on their agenda with an eye toward a public vote at the 2018 Town Meeting. Eric will attend the Select Board meeting on September 18 to ask that that happens and that they will make the services of Brian Story available to us for research, etc.

A lot of work is necessary in order to make that come about. We need to prioritize our goals and convince the community that they should vote for making the fund a reality. It'll involve identifying a percentage on the dollar that will raise an acceptable amount of money yearly.

We're not alone: Noah Pollack and Jens Hilke have offered assistance and we can bring in community members who are interested. We can get reports from other towns that have done the process and learn from their experience. We can also use surveys to ask the public what they'd like to see prioritized.

All in all, lots of work. A proposal for the Select Board regarding Town Meeting needs to be done in December. Nat tells us that there are many requests for budget/tax increases next year. It may be a tough sell.

For the October meeting, we need a list of places and ways we can use the fund. As well, we need to ascertain how much money we should request.

TUESDAY NIGHT LIVE

It's over for another season and went very well. Laura and Sue's last display, about hiking, was well attended, as was Eric's input on the Paddler's Trail. There was applause for Sue's trail maps; she blushed.

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

The discussion and airing of suggestions was postponed again until the October meeting.

BAT HOUSES

On Saturday, October 7 at 10:00, we'll meet at Phil Wilson's house to cut and stain the components of ten bat houses, which Phil will store and assemble over the winter. Noel, Dean and Sue will bring tools. Should it rain, we'll go to Lois' garage.

TRAILS

Brian Story has requested our input on a possible mountain bike trail to be built on the Talc property. He suggested that we walk the property with him, perhaps on the last weekend in September or first weekend of October. Noel has agreed to go and others will join as well.

Noel reports that trails of this type involve jumps and bridges, requiring heavy maintenance. They have a heavy impact on the environment. Use should be restricted in areas such as deeryards and bear habitat.

Nat said that significant economic development is happening around mountain bike trails in other towns and that perhaps we could tie in with other trails. He also suggested that we should make our concerns known to the Select Board.

In the event that a trail is built, a local mountain bike club would be developed that might provide some oversight.

Lois recommended that we should consider a larger vision and include the Recreation Committee in it.

MISC

- Eric reports a good apple crop at Gomo that is attracting deer and bear. Take a bow for a great apple release job, everybody!
- The trails at Gomo are in good shape; with one exception, ATVs are staying on the road. Eric suggests we should drop a tree across the entrance on the Waterville side.
- Noel has the disc from the LANDS Talc report.
- We're going to be reeeeeeally busy.
- A motion was made and passed to change the meeting date to the second Tuesday of each month.

Adjourned at 8:35

Next meeting is on Tuesday, October 10, at the Library at 6:30.

Submitted by Sue Lovering, Secretary