

JOHNSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
9 DECEMBER 2021

Present: Lois Frey, Sue Lovering, Noel Dodge, Peter Hammond, Jared Jasinski, Carrie Watson, Denise Ashman

Absent: Dean Locke, Jackie Stanton

The December minutes were approved.

Added to the agenda: Christmas Bird Count, game camera program

RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Would a new mission statement better reflect the CC's aims in light of a new Recreation Management Plan? Should we re-create our mission? We think so.

Ideas that were discussed bounced between the plan and the mission. Those included these:

- What is our role? Answer: along with protecting our public properties, we are educators and are charged as advisors to the selectboard and public.
- Our ideas pertaining to nature should come through.
- Our experience and knowledge should be emphasized.
- Does the community think of us as trail people?
- Lois asked how we can help the selectboard work within our role.

We could ask that the town administrator be required to notify us about any activity on town land, even if it's only an idea that's being voiced. We send the message that we want to be part of any conversation and process before it becomes a final decision.

~ How do we make our recommendations carry weight? We should communicate by email with the selectboard, trustees, planning commission, and administrator about how we feel and why about each development project (recreational and commercial). Technically, they don't have to listen to us but we need to communicate.

➤ We should define our status without being overbearing. Don't use the word "shall". Or should we?

➤ Methods we might use in writing the plan:

➤ Break out each property, inventory its natural, etc, assets, identify and recommend activities that should/shouldn't happen there.

➤ Point out widespread ramifications from use of motorized vehicles.

➤ List recreation types.

➤ Noel pointed out that the state has enabling legislation and has set no mandates. We need to be more formal.

- Our first step should be to create a new mission statement, present it to the selectboard, and then present the new Recreation Management Plan. Denise offered to write the statement and a purpose statement; she'll send drafts to each of us and ask for feedback.

- A second statement will list how the selectboard, trustees, planning commission, and individuals can utilize our expertise, ensuring that we can be more effective. Noel will draw up an outline of guidelines for this second statement.

It can include ideas of dispersed recreation: no trails, no kiosks, people can hunt. We can gather data from groups who have done this, such as the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

It'll be a small one, as many of the CBC regulars have expressed no interest this year. We decided to go on Sunday, January 2. Noel will be in touch.

GAME CAMERAS

The Salisbury Library has a program that loans out game cameras that the JPL would like to emulate. Would we like to partnership with them by buying the cameras? We could do it with tiny grants and there would be some advantage in using the pictures to document different areas.

We did not reach a decision.

HELP WITH TALK

The Library has asked if we'd like to co-host their Winter Series program, Wildlife Identification, with Eric Nuse on zoom on February 23. There will be a follow-up tracking walk a week later. We will.

COMMUNITY VALUES PROJECT FOLLOWUP

We are disappointed. Jens Hilke never presented to the selectboard, due to covid restrictions. But we never received the notes from the facilitators and he promised to send Noel the final files at the April, 2021 meeting and he did not do it. Noel will look into it.

MISC:

Noel has a pile of stuff to do.

The town can't sell the Prindle Property. It was bought as mitigation for the Jewett property development.

The Christmas potluck was a sad affair. Unlike other years, when we had a ton of fun, this year only Sue and Lois bothered, even though there was an interest expressed when asked. Some wondered what happened to the CC's spirit?

Minutes recorded by Sue Lovering, Secretary