

JOHNSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 10, 2022

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

The February minutes were approved.

Added to the agenda: VRC's invasives management plan for McCuin Island, cedar for Journey's End bridge railing.

MISSION STATEMENT

Should we have a townofjohnson email contact for contacting the CC? The answer was yes; we'll bring the request to the selectboard.

The final mission statement and request were approved:

The Conservation Commission's mission is stewardship of public lands; advocating for the protection of all of Johnson's natural resources for present and future generations. We endeavor to strengthen relationships between the people of Johnson and our natural environment, to instill a shared responsibility and awareness within the community for the protection and preservation of the environment, and to achieve a balance with present and future responsible growth. The Commission's charge is to advise the Select Board, Planning Commission, Trustees, special interest groups, and individuals on matters concerning Johnson's lands and natural resources.

We request that the Selectboard make it their policy that formal comment from the Conservation Commission be a required component of any development idea or proposal on town property.

The next step is to develop a template with the steps we want people to follow. Sue created a list to consider:

- Does the project reflect community values?
- Does it respect the Natural Resource Inventory?
- State regulations?
- Is there need? Does it make sense? (Think bridge)
- Does it preserve historical and cultural integrity of surrounding habitat?
- Is there old growth?
- What's the environmental impact? (Corridors, deeryards, etc.)

- What's the impact on erosion, runoff, flooding, clean water, clean air?
- How does it protect wildlife?
- Identify if the property is a fragile environment.
- Designate certain pieces as off-limits, such as the Reservoir property and McCuin Island.
- Designate pieces for protection, such as Willow Crossing, flood plains, steep hills, wetlands, scenic views.
- Require developers to conduct open space and habitat assessment. Our standards for protection should be clear, concise, specific, and consistent.

In order to make the case to the selectboard, we can explain that our mission is not being adequately addressed. They need to understand that we need to be a voice in the process and one that is really heard. Less development equals lower taxes because there are fewer roads, fewer school students, and less cost involved. Better environment means real economic impact: tourism. Vermont loses 1500 acres of habitat to development every year.

Lois will get the request and statement on the next Selectboard agenda on March 21. We should all be there to speak for it.

TRAIL BUILDING NOTES

The selectboard didn't endorse the latest trail and bridge proposal for the use of ARPA funds. Instead, they will use them for the Jewett property. During that meeting, new selectboard member Duncan Hastings reported the CC's concerns about the recreation proposal and our wish to weigh in, a refreshing change from our usual state of being overlooked. Thank our fearless, peerless leader Lois for updating him before the meeting.

SHADE TREE PRESERVATION PLAN

A public meeting will be held for it on March 17 at the municipal building at 6:00, then it will go before the selectboard on March 21. Everyone is welcome to attend.

GOMO KIOSK

"Well, the ground's frozen."

BAT HOUSES AT THE ARB

They're down but we'll get them up in the spring. One pole is all that remains upright.

RADIO SPOTS ABOUT NATURAL RESOURCES

Jackie suggested that informative PSAs would be a good way to educate on WLVD but she isn't interested in doing it herself.

McCUIN ISLAND

Lois had a letter from Noah Pollack regarding the River Conservancy's plan to remove invasives on the island by volunteers in the spring and fall. Not-so-brightly, it mentioned by name the rare plant growing there. The concern we have is that those volunteers won't know what they're looking at, stepping on, and pulling up, and we have questions about the spraying. Noah will visit the April meeting to discuss the project. Meanwhile, Lois will let him know that we have concerns and that the name of endangered/rare plants shouldn't be broadcast.

FPR

Forest, Parks and Recreation's Dan Singleton has asked to be on our agenda to discuss repairs to the road where it crosses a corner of the Reservoir property. Noel will contact him about coming to the April meeting. The Reservoir property abuts state land and no one is sure whether there is a management plan on it.

MISC

- Sue will print some new letterheads with the new mission statement on them.
- Carrie saw a big bald eagle flying over Dog's Head.
- Thanks, Lois, for reviving the sustenance, yumyum-ness, and all-around social pleasantry of cookies.
 - For once, we were all present at the meeting. So Jared set up his doodad to take a group shot that came out well.

Adjourned at 8:35.

The next meeting is on April 14, at 6:30 at the municipal building.

Submitted by Sue Lovering, Secretary