

JOHNSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 12, 2022

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

Absent: Carrie Watson

Guests: Doug Molde, Noah Pollack

Keegan Tierney will not join us tonight but will re-schedule.
The April minutes were approved.

PADDLER'S TRAIL

Noah Pollack, the River Conservancy's project manager, plans work days at McCuin Island for removal of invasive honeysuckle and knotweed by a crew of volunteers in June and August. They'll use wire mesh and possible spraying on the knotweed and hand pull the honeysuckle.

The JCC voiced concerns about this project, noting that there are two populations of a rare plant and that volunteers may not know enough about plants to avoid damaging the fragile environment there. We were told not to worry.

We again discussed the impact of a campsite on McCuin. We were reminded that we have no say in the island's running, due to caveat in the deed that reflect the desires of the purchase price donor.

Noah gave these pertinent facts:

- They know where the rare plants are, even though their map misrepresents them.
- The VRC has been "slow to develop" McCuin because of its fragility. Upon the island's acquisition, they put "easement light" in place.
- They'll keep a primitive campsite there, including a box privy, signage, and possibly steps. They'll stay away from the rare plants and the beaver lodge.
- Currently, on their website they allow 5 tents with 12 people, two tents more than at other campsites. Noah thinks they could change that to four tents. He thinks that there are 2 campers there per year.
- They could talk about closing it when/if the impact becomes too much.
- They could look for an alternative site but McCuin is an "important stopping site". This assurance was also made three years ago.

The JCC suggested:

- There could be certain times of year that temporary closures are mandated, such as during spring ephemeral season.
- Ecological assessment has been done by state biologists Eric Sorenson and Aaron Marcus, and Kim Jenson, who have recommended caution as far as impact on the island. As for their help in the next steps in protecting the island, we need to jumpstart it.
- Lois pointed out that we were left out of the discussions and Dean made the point that we were "drop-kicked out" of the acquisition/protection process after our input was sought and received.
- We need to identify new considerations like nesting sites that come over time and add those to the closure list.

Noah feels that the VRC shares the JCC's environmental concerns and that we're all a good partnership.
Uh huh.

KEEGAN TIERNEY'S VISIT

He wants to talk about potential grants and may be able to visit in September.

MISSION STATEMENT

Concerns from the selectboard when presented with the request for a say in development included turnaround time on our part. We decided to suggest that we give a response in approximately 4 days. We need to keep reminding the selectboard that we hear about things too late.

One word, 'further', was added to the request, so it now reads: 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. We **further** request that all project proposals include written comment from the Johnson Conservation Commission before action by the selectboard.

GOMO KIOSK

Dean will order PT 4x4s for the kiosk and two 14' 4x4s for the bat houses at the Arboretum from RK Miles.

BAT HOUSES

No date set yet for repairs.

BEARD'S RECREATION

Lois wrote to the Tech Center about building a handicapped picnic table but never had a response. She'll speak with the Mennonite outdoor furniture builders about an octagonal table with a top adjusted to a correct height.

MOTION PASSED

A motion was unanimously passed to donate the flyer holder in Sue's shed to the Tree Board for use on the Arboretum kiosk.

MISC:

- There was no laughing at this meeting. There was, however, a swell assortment of snacks.
- But there was a suggestion that we could plant poison ivy at the McCuin campsite.
- Okay, there was laughter. But there was annoyance, outrage, and the feeling of betrayal, too.

Adjourned at 8:35.

Submitted by Sue Lovering, Secretary.

Next meeting on June 9, 2022 at the Library at 6:30.

