

JOHNSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 9, 2023

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

Absent: Peter Hammond, Aurora River

The February minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

No change in the budget balance, as nothing has been purchased.

LAND MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Our first management review form was sent to us by Casey Romero, who is proposing to augment a structure at the Skatepark. It will require a berm. The project doesn't have funding yet and isn't likely to happen for months, so details aren't available.

Our answer concerns the document as it stands now:

- Our main concern is about the quality of fill that may be brought in. We want to avoid introduction of invasives and pollutants.
- Will fill be needed? If so, where will it come from?
- When the project proceeds, we'll ask for additional information about source and condition of fill.
- A color copy of Casey's map should be made.

Our method will consist of making a quick response to a submitted form, saying "Thank you for submitting your form. After reviewing it, we will respond ..." (That's as far as we got with that thought). Our considered response will be made on the CC letterhead with a copy of the submitted form attached, and sent to the CC, the selectboard, and to the submitter. We'll create a digital copy of map and form and store the originals in Sue's file cabinet.

Lois will write Casey's response and Sue will do them going forward.

ROADSIDE MOWING

Denise spoke with Bob Popp, who suggested mowing between the third and fourth weeks of June in order to get late flowers and early fruits. We should also aim to get chervil. He advised checking with INaturalist for details.

Denise drafted a memo to the public works foreman regarding mowing times. She'll send the body of it to Lois, who will send it to public works and the selectboard from the JCC on the JCC letterhead.

Noel suggested getting folks to send parsnip locations to INaturalist.

POLLINATOR PROJECT ON WESCOM

Denise has researched the Bee the Change Town Pollinator Project, in which BTC provides labor and seeds to prepare soil and plant a wildflower meadow. There is an emphasis on education and they provide some signage. They've done 30 towns so far, including Hyde Park, and plan to begin a project in Cambridge this year. It should involve no cost, though they may ask local businesses for donations. Should we get on their schedule?

Noel measured the Wescom property as 2.29 acres and we agreed that an acre of that along the rivers' edge should be allowed to revert to a buffer zone. That leaves about an acre, which ought to have a mowed buffer around it. The SPAN number is 336-104-11589. As regards occasional use of the land for parking by the Skatepark, Casey was consulted and has no problem with our changing that use.

We passed a motion to take on the project with Bee the Change. Denise will contact BTC with our response and question about whether we can leave trees there. She'll write a short summary for Lois. And we'll get on the Selectboard's agenda to get their approval.

ASH TREES PRESERVED AT THE ARBORETUM

A motion to allocate up to \$500, to be matched by the Tree Board, to systemically treat ash trees at the Arboretum was passed. Sue will pursue choosing a pesticide applicator.

The trees are located in the southwestern corner of the Arb and will be a part of the planned wildflower garden.

BAT VIDEO

There have been problems connecting with Chris Demars, so Lois and Sue have a new plan: they'll rewrite the script, which will focus on two upscale bats in picture hats, at a posh place, with a butler, drinking bloody marys and talking about the bat housing crisis. They're working on the script and will connect with another videographer if necessary.

MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

We need to set an April work day to repair the Prindle and Wescom kiosks. Lois and Jared will do an exploratory reconnaissance to see what needs to be done.

MARCH GLADNESS

It'll be pollinators on Sunday, followed by the Green Mountain Backcountry Program next Sunday. They'll be posted on Front Porch Forum in Johnson, Morrisville and Hyde Park. Noel will talk about INaturalist on the 26th at 10:00.

MISC

- Bob Popp, who has since retired, was looking for funding to start a Vermont native plant nursery. Hopefully, someone has taken over that quest.
- It's been observed that the quality of our snacks just goes up. Way to go!

Adjourned at 8:45

Submitted by Sue Lovering

Next meeting will be on Thursday, April 13, 2023, at the Library at 6:30