Franconia Conservation Commission

Meeting: Sept 30th, 2016, 8 am

Members present: Mary Grote, Ginny Jeffryes, Kim Cowles, John LaChapelle, Red McCarthy, Chris Nicodemus.

Minutes of 7/27/2016 reviewed, and approved.

Update on beavers on Meadow Brook on Lawrence property: Dams were looked at, discussed with SB and Fransted, who is just downstream. Fransted independently contacted Chris Hodge, a trapper, who visited site and believed beavers had moved elsewhere. Then Kim and Chris walked the area with Fish and Game, made a few small breaches, which would trigger repair if beavers still present. No repairs made and the water level has dropped since. Last checked by Kim yesterday and still no sign of beavers. Thus, no longer a threat at present. And now there is a lot of good watershed buffer area to absorb flood water, should that ever occur.

Update on Rails to Trails grant: Granted a small portion of what we applied for: $4620 to make Fox Hill Park’s Gale River trail handicapped accessible. We had requested about $26,000. We cannot start the project until November per the grant. Kim to verify the end date required for completion. Kim proposes we focus on the initial portion of that trail, from the Kiosk to the Coleman property, which is the wettest part. Kim had looked for local knowledgeable volunteers for ideas on ways to approach but not much response. She walked it with Mark Champagne, who suggests laying down logs and woodchips, covered with fabric, then ledgepack on top. Ginny will see if Dave Govatski can look at it - he designed and supervised handicapped accessible trail build at Mud Pond at Pondicherry Refuge.

Lawrence property update:

--Still to think about signs over next few months. Once conservation easement is approved at Town Meeting, ACT will mark the perimeter. Chris says recent discussion at NEMBA for the various area mountain biking trails was they might use small plastic marker signs similar to what are being discussed for Cooley Jericho Forest. Also will need to design the nice wood ones as an extension of the type of Fox Hill Park has. Include the rules such as no camping, no motorized vehicles.

--Kim will obtain from Sally the RSA wording for what the town needs to vote on and send it to Ginny to work on some prelim ideas of how to word this, for further work by the Committee next meeting. We’ll request the easement for this specific property, rather than blanket now and future approval that some towns have. 1989 wording to accept Fox Hill Park was a different situation, because that land already had an SPNHF easement and was a donation as is.

--Trails – will put in no new trails for now there. Are getting some use, some people appear to be accessing from end of Old County Road. Right now we have Meadow Brook Trail, Tucker Brook Trail, portion of Pebble Beach Trail, and the newer Ronnie’s Ramble, all which preexisted the purchase. We’ll need to work on updating the trail map but not yet clear which organization will work on this. TBD over time.

New Conservation Commission member(s) needed, since Eric and Kathy resigned this month, will be missed. RSA mandates 3 to 7 members, alternates also an option. ? who might be interested.

Next meeting Thursday Oct 27 8 am.

Meeting adjourned at 8:58 am

Minutes submitted by Ginny Jeffryes