Franconia Conservation Commission (FCC)

Meeting: October 4, 2022, 4 pm at Town Hall

Members present: Chris Nicodemus (Chair), Ginny Jeffryes, Mary Grote, Red McCarthy (till 4:40), Jill Brewer, Dan Zajic

Guests: Rosalind Page (of Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust (ACT)), Peter Grote

Minutes: Red moves to approve 8-16-22 minutes as amended. Chris seconds, unanimously approved.

Fox Hill Park near-boundary trash bag on Dow Ave side: Dan was unable to locate the trash bag.

McKenzie Woods: Per Chris, as part of his work for new property owner, Gardner Kellogg will add a couple flags on edge of (formerly) Noonan parcel of easement along Middle Earth trail so we can accurately place our additional conservation easement signs.

Mittersill wetlands permit – Chris reports request for accelerated permit for dry hydrant at Mittersill fire pond. Ginny moves that we authorize Chris to sign the accelerated wetlands permit at the Mittersill Fire pond for the dry hydrant. Dan seconds. Unanimous vote in favor.

Town Forest discussion: [Tax map 17-2, 41 acres] Chris reports that Select Board minutes of 1990 document that Ruth Vail mentions existence of a Right of Way to it. Review of Deed records indicate Town acquired Town Forest in 1982 via Quit Claim from previous owner, but it includes no mention of a conservation easement. Ginny explains some historical on-line deed research she did on the property. Discussion that we agreed in August meeting that we want to conserve it. Conserving the abutting 4.2 acre Fini parcel (Map 17.3.0) across from Town Forest also makes sense.

Further discussion today with agreement that it makes sense to have ACT conserve it since it’s contiguous with the Lawrence Family Forest on which they hold the conservation easement.

Rosalind Page says that ACT is enthusiastic about working with FCC about this. She says costs would include: 1) ACT requires a current boundary survey map. 2) Legal fees: to ascertain clear title. Lawyer also handles the closing of the conservation easement, and their other attorney has a prepared conservation document already that he modifies for the specific easement document, so it’s likely to be simple. She doesn’t anticipate high legal fees. 3) ACT staff processing fees will have a cost.

ACT will do a budget via Excel spreadsheet.

Rosalind explains that after closing/filing, there is a long term easement stewardship cost, based on a number of hours they anticipate for monitoring expenses annually. For that they make their best guess re violation frequency they’ll have to enforce. It probably won’t be much due to Town ownership. This can be pledged over years.

Besides coming out of Conservation Fund, if we approve, ACT can seek grant funding, from Water Protection fund, Mitigation fund, various other available grants. ACT’s staff ecologist looks at the property to help to decide whether to go for available water protection funding, or wildlife funds.

Further discussion today among members that we agree that protecting this streamside parcel fits the purpose of the Conservation Fund, and we would also like to pursue grant funds if available.

Chris moves that we submit a project application to ACT to place a conservation easement on lot 17-2 and 17.3.0, and to authorization $500 from the Conservation Fund for the ACT application fee. Ginny seconds. Unanimous vote in favor of motion.

Chris moves that we request a quote or quotes for an updated survey of both lots. Jill seconds. Unanimous vote in favor of motion.

Project budget will be submitted by ACT for our approval. Grant funding will be sought by ACT to decrease the amount coming out of the Conservation Fund.

Ginny wonders if Town meeting needs to vote on this or whether CC and SB can vote to put in Conservation. Jill thinks not, but she will check on this.

Next meeting: Tues November 15, 2022, 4 pm.

Minutes by Ginny Jeffryes