Franconia Conservation Commission (FCC)

Meeting: May 15, 2018, 8 am.

Members present: Kim Cowles, Chris Nicodemus, Ginny Jeffryes, Red McCarthy

Minutes 3-20-2018 reviewed. Kim moves to accept. Mary seconds. Unanimously approved.

Minutes 4-17-2018 reviewed and amended. No quorum of members that were present that date so approval vote deferred to next meeting. Red doesn’t think deferral needed, some discussion re protocols re this under meeting rules.

Trails update: (Chris). Kim located the McKenzie subdivision Conservation easement description document map 22 parcel 4, lot 12 [referencing the 2005 subdivision plan map]. Chris reached out to the 94 acre parcel’s current owner after our last meeting on behalf of the Trails group/master plan development. The trails were there before they bought the property, but they had only recently become aware of extensive nature of the bicycle/cross country ski from the trail signs they’d seen. They are ATV/snowmobile enthusiasts, and intend to use and further develop their some of the land for high speed ATV use. They alluded in their conversation to their high speed motorized use not being compatible with bikers/skiers although this was only touched on briefly during this preliminary conversation with them. Chris provided them with the Franconia recreational trail map. Chris notes that Middle Earth is a main artery to the trail system, and many of the existing trails are, in fact, on this parcel, so this is concerning for the future of the trail system. The 2005 conservation easement Franconia Conservation Commission holds on the conserved [34.56 acre] portion of their land states in the Use Limitation section (in part) “… recreational trails for nonmotorized activities such as cross country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, horseback riding, bird watching ….” The easement includes Middle Earth trail. It may include parts of some of the more southwestern connector trails. Chris notes that a large pond has been created recently, in the center of the Skid Row trail, which doesn’t appear to be on our easement property. Ginny hasn’t seen any wetlands approval for building a pond on the DES website and wonders if maybe no wetlands were involved, or if an omission. If a stream or wetlands were involved an application would be required. We need the 2005 Subdivision map referred to in the Easement language – we don’t have that. Red is tracking that down. Two separate issues here: 1) Our Conservation easement needs to be defended re this nonmotorized use clause; and 2) The trails negotiation Chris is doing for maintaining/developing local trails system about the various trails on the land. Discussion that the second issue is on behalf of Chris’s independent role in the Trails group and not specific to Conservation Commission purview. Regarding defending the easement usage: Red suggests involving Town Counsel in drafting a letter. Discussion re need to act proactively in case the property owners are planning their motorized activities encroaching on the easement. Important to protect wildlife habitat and conservation purposes. Decided that Ginny will bring this to next Select Board meeting to discuss how to address. Discussion that we should be posting new boundary signs soon. Kim will complete the in-progress order for the new Conservation easement signs, plan to have these before next meeting. Red will help locate the difficult-to-find southeastern (upland) easement boundary so we can post the signs. Mary may be able to help with locating the pin we couldn’t find on one of her land boundaries – Chris and Red will work with her.

Meadow Brook Trail: Beavers have set up a dam again, this year closer to the campground currently flooding part of the Meadow Brook trail. Ginny and Kim separately were in that area about 3 weeks ago and didn’t see it then. Chris says Meadow Brook trail may need to be moved uphill some. Ginny points out that Rebecca Brown of ACT had stated no new trails along the Brook – they hold the Conservation Easement. Chris will discuss moving trail with Rebecca. Brief discussion that beaver dam isn’t a threat downstream and we do not intend to intervene with their activity.

River walk trail update: After the 4/17/18 meeting members present [except Jill] looked at the Japanese knotweed section behind the new Presby building. It is within 25 feet of the river, so a licensed applicator will need to apply an aquatic formulation to it.

DES draft wetlands rules update – Ginny sent the email comment discussed last meeting. Sent 4/20 after circulating it. We received a reply of receipt on the same date. DES plan is to work on the final rules throughout the summer and early fall, then we’ll hear when they post the proposed rules for comment.

Town volunteer/employee appreciation picnic: May 24 12p-3 p at the Dow. Rain date 5/31.

Next meeting: Tuesday of June 19th, 8 am

Minutes by Ginny Jeffryes.