

APPROVED

Town of Grantham Grantham Conservation Commission

MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 18, 2016

Chairman Richard Hocker called the Grantham Conservation Commission to order on Monday, April 18, 2016 at 7:06 p.m. The meeting was held in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room at Grantham Town Hall located at 300 Route 10 South in Grantham, NH.

Present: Chairman Richard Hocker, David Wood, Susan Buchanan, Dennis Ryan

Meeting minutes: Nikki Arsenault

Absent: Laura Nagy, Rich Kaszeta, John Larrabee

Members of the Public: n/a

ADMINISTRATIVE

Approval of Minutes for the March 21, 2016 Meeting

Chairman Hocker asked if there were any additions, corrections, or modifications to the draft meeting minutes for the March 21, 2016 meeting. The following clarifications and modifications were suggested:

No changes or modifications were made to the meeting minutes.

A motion was made by Buchanan to approve the March 21, 2016 minutes; second by Wood. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

OTHER BUSINESS

Brookside Park:

Trail Activities – Wood noted that they had originally planned to do the initial pour on Saturday. The intent was to pour one side this coming weekend and the other side (the west side) next weekend. However, the temperature and weather forecast did not allow for it. In the meantime, Rick Anderson and Brandon Mason of Hypertherm arrived on Friday and finished installing most of the pins in the stones, built a temporary bridge, and cleaned up the rocks and covered the area over. This coming

APPROVED

Saturday they will mix the concrete and pour both sides at one time. Wood noted that he brought over all of the decking for the i-beam bridge, so it's now all in place. Wood added that it would be very nice as part of the July 4th Old Home Day to be able to give people tours of the park and to have the bridge construction and signage completed. The Student Conservation Association bridge will likely be complete by that time as well. Wood suggested added trail signs at the parking lot, far end of the bridge, and at each of the intersections. He would also like to add signs and/or markers at various interesting features of the park. As an example, in the case of table/alligator rock, it was likely that the rocks were moved into place by glacial activity. This is something that would be too much information for a sign but a situation in which a QR code would work nicely. The QR code would ideally send the hiker to a website for additional information. This would enable the GCC to update or change information as needed. Wood noted that he is able to receive Verizon iPhone coverage in the park but is curious if AT&T offers good coverage in the area. Does anyone know a person with an iPhone with AT&T coverage? Is T-Mobile a separate carrier? Ryan noted that he has T-Mobile but is unsure how it would work at the park. Wood added that he will work on this and get back to the group.

Wood has identified 18 (possibly 19) items that he would like to feature in some detail, including 7 signs and 18 features for a total of 25. From a cost perspective, signs would be \$12.95 each; the cost totals closer to \$18 with posts and screws factored in. Therefore, this would equal a total cost of approximately \$450. Wood asked of the GCC members considered the signage worth the cost. Buchanan agreed that this would be a good idea, as did Ryan.

Chairman Hocker interjected that there is approximately \$4,000 remaining that could be used for this particular purpose from the Bern Foundation. Hocker recommended that this is where the money should be allocated from.

Wood added that there may be additional signs needed as the project progresses; perhaps a sign in the parking area describing the QR codes, and another asking for visitors to be respectful of the park, i.e. "Take only pictures, leave only footprints" or something similar as there is not currently a "Do not litter" sign posted in the park.

Wood asked for a motion to appropriate up to \$500 for signage at Brookside Park from the Byrne Foundation funding.

Buchanan made a motion to approve up to \$500 for signage at Brookside Park, to be deducted from the Byrne Foundation funding.

Ryan seconded the motion.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

Planning for Town trail map:

APPROVED

Wood informed the Commission that he would like to make the mapping of Brookside Park part of a bigger project of creating maps for all of Grantham. Wood would like to use the Trail Finder website supported by the Upper Valley Trails Alliance for the purpose. UVTA would like organizations to join the Upper Valley Trails Alliance, and Wood suggested that GCC join as well so that we can begin to build this GPS information via their Trail Finder website. The membership fee is \$100. Chairman Hocker noted that this would need to come out of general funds. Ryan questioned if this was a yearly membership fee, and Wood confirmed that this is correct. Buchanan asked if GCC would receive assistance in making the trail maps as part of this membership fee. Wood noted that the primary purpose of this project would be to input GCC's collected GPS coordinates into the Trail Finder system to create downloadable maps. Wood added that this organization will be compiling thousands of trails in New Hampshire and Vermont.

Chairman Hocker noted that he would entertain a motion to approve the use of the sum of \$100 for the Grantham Conservation Commission to join the Upper Valley Trails Alliance.

Buchanan made a motion to approve the sum of \$100 to join the Upper Valley Trails Alliance from general funds.

Ryan seconded the motion.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

Cost Elements – Invoices and receipts were provided by Kaszeta for approval for reimbursement. Chairman Hocker noted that two of the charges on the receipts were for personal use and are not included in the total amount being requested for reimbursement. Hocker added that the total amount for reimbursement is calculated at \$387.15. Commission members were provided copies of the receipts for perusal.

Chairman Hocker noted that these funds, if approved, would be taken from the general funding allocated for trail work.

Wood made a motion to approve reimbursement in the amount of \$387.15 from general funds.

Ryan seconded the motion.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

Chairman Hocker noted that money was added to the current year's budget for Public Works to help improve the parking area. Hocker will report back to the group at the next meeting regarding this topic. Some structures may need to be removed in order to improve the parking lot, but this will be re-visited in the future.

Ryan questioned the date for the upcoming activities at Brookside Park. Buchanan noted that Nagy was searching for people to assist with the SCA project on either April 27th or 28th. She did not yet follow up with a confirmed date and time. Chairman Hocker noted that White has offered the use of the back

APPROVED

parking lot and a key to the lower level for use of the restrooms at Town Hall for use during the project. The only other remaining item is that there will need to be a porta-potty at Brookside Park for the workers while they are building the trails. Wood asked if this would be located in the parking lot and Hocker confirmed this to be correct. Buchanan added that the group completing the work would like to see the site and the area where they will be camping prior to the start of the project. Ryan noted that he will follow up on this with Matt Coughlin of SCA NH AmeriCorps. Ryan questioned if the location is negotiable for any reason in case they suggest an alternate location. Hocker agreed that in this particular situation he could come back to have the Commission vote, if needed. Wood added that there are a number of hemlocks that are clearly in the way; he is happy to help drop these unless they will be helpful for rigging the i-beams across. Ryan will ask about the hemlocks and report back to the Commission.

Buchanan asked for clarification regarding the time and schedule for the concrete pour this coming Saturday. Wood noted that he is in the process of recruiting additional people to assist. Rick and Brandon from Hypertherm expressed interested in being there but have not yet confirmed. Buchanan offered to reach out to see if the two men would be available to assist. Arsenault noted that she would reach out to see if there was a possibility of adding a blurb to the Grantham newsletter regarding the need for volunteers in pouring the footers.

OTHER BOARD ACTIVITIES

Miller Pond Bridge status – Chairman Hocker noted that the current weight limit of the road is 15 tons. The current plan is to increase the weight limit up to 50 tons. This will enable GCC to assist in expanding the use of the Smith lot for hikers, birders, etc. The second issue will be the continued lumbering on the Flewelling property across from the Smith lot. This will likely become a contentious issue once the bridge is fixed. The bounds in this case are outline by the current Forrest Management Plan that has been set in place for that property.

Hocker added that the status of the bridge is that the contract is in place and the work is scheduled to begin as soon as weather permits. Buchanan questioned if the conservation easement in place allows them to clear as much as they would like? Hocker replied that they are not allowed to do so. Hocker elaborated on the forest management plan and added that Brooks McCanlis was the author of the current plan. Chairman Hocker added, following a question from Buchanan, that the forest management plan is the responsibility of the property owner and does not condone clear-cutting in any shape or form. Hocker added that GCC likely has the backing of the Selectmen in order to ensure that proper forestry practices are upheld.

Wood asked if Jeremy Turner might be available to consult on this issue, if needed. Wood asked what the Town would have to approve a potential cutting application. Hocker responded that there would normally be an intent to cut filed, but GCC does not have any legislative authority other than to approve the intent. Wood questioned who has the authority to enforce the Forestry management plan? Hocker

APPROVED

answered that the Selectmen have the authority in this case. So, in this case, Brooks McCanlis is responsible for the plan for the property in question. Hocker added that GCC could try to get Turner to look at the plan and to ask McCanlis to also potentially be included in this conversation. Hocker noted that based on the information received, the property owner will likely want to cut, as he had prior asked the Town to help get the abutters' permission to use Levitt Road. Hocker will follow up with Turner regarding this issue and the potential for him to weigh in on the current management plan.

Buchanan questioned what McCanlis' opinion might be regarding what is currently happening on the property. Wouldn't he likely have a vested interest in the plan being followed properly? Hocker answered that McCanlis said that his responsibility was to the property owner. Following a comment from Buchanan, Hocker confirmed that any action to enforce anything related to the plan falls to the Selectmen.

Chairman Hocker asked if there were any additional comments or topics:

- Wood noted with regard to the perambulation that it is scheduled for the 25th of April and the 2nd of May. If weather is not permitting, hopefully both can be completed on May 2nd.

- Wood noted that GCC may want to consider proposing a warrant article in 2018 with regard to land acquisition. Perhaps it could be a warrant to allow the Selectman to spend up to a certain amount of money within a certain number of qualifications. This will likely need to be addressed at a later meeting. Wood added that our goals must be widely understood prior to attending a Town meeting; what do we need to do in order to make this happen? Buchanan noted that she has not been able to get the Open Spaces Committee to address this clearly but the majority of the committee was widely opposed to saying anything about a bond. Wood noted that GCC needs support for land acquisition; is there a way to include this in the Master Plan? Hocker agreed to ask White what would need to be done in order to have some language included in the Master Plan. Buchanan added that the next Open Spaces Committee meeting is scheduled for May and that she will provide updates accordingly.

HANDOUTS / ACTIVITIES

Receipts provided by Kaszeta (discussed above) for approval for reimbursement.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Hocker asked if there was any further business. There being none, Buchanan moved to adjourn the meeting and Dennis seconded the motion.

The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

APPROVED

The next meeting of the Grantham Conservation Commission will be held at 7:00 p.m. in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room on Monday, May 16, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Nikki Arsenault

Nikki Arsenault, Secretary