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Town of Grantham Grantham Conservation Commission

MEETING MINUTES

June 20, 2016

Chairman Richard Hocker called the Grantham Conservation Commission to order on Monday, June 20, 2016 at 7:03 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, Dennis Ryan, John Larrabee, Susan Buchanan, Rich Kaszeta, David Wood, Laura Nagy

Meeting minutes: Nikki Arsenault

Members of the Public: John Eylander, Karen Eylander

ADMINISTRATIVE

Approval of Minutes for the May 16, 2016 Meeting

Chairman Hocker asked if there were any additions, corrections, or modifications to the draft meeting minutes for the May 16, 2016 meeting. The following clarifications and modifications were suggested:

Ryan submitted grammatical corrections in writing to Arsenault. Wood also contributed grammatical edits to the meeting minutes. Discussion ensued amongst commission members regarding the validity of these edits and Buchanan added an additional comment regarding the proper title for Selectman Sheridan Brown under the section entitled "Members of the Public".

There being no additional changes or additions to the minutes, Chairman Hocker noted that he would entertain a motion to approve the May 16, 2016 minutes as amended.

A motion was made by Larrabee to approve the May 16, 2016 minutes as amended by the Commission; second by Buchanan. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote. Nagy abstained from the vote due to the fact that she was not present at the May 2016 meeting.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

NEW BUSINESS

Outdoor Classroom Committee – Karen and John Eylander questioned if the GCC might have some funding to assist the OCC in repairing the trail and bridge beams. Chairman Hocker noted that there is a company in Acworth, NH that produces the difficult to find 3x8x10ft wood beams. He added that if the order was big enough, they might deliver the wood; hemlock would likely be the wood that would be

APPROVED

available. Hocker added that GCC could likely help with the project but the Commission will need additional details about the project; specifically the number of planks needed, etc. John Eylander announced that in addition to the cost of supplies needed to complete the plank work, they would also like to expand the trail into the wetlands areas. He questioned if the Commission had advice regarding fundraising; he also noted that the public would also be able to reserve the outdoor classroom when the school is not in session. John E. wondered how to best bring to light this great resource so that many community groups could use this resource.

Chairman Hocker suggested that a good first step would be to contact RL Balla in Acworth to obtain a price quote for the lumber needed. The company will need the width and length measurements as well as the number of boards in order to provide a quote. Nagy questioned if the extension of the trail would need planks. John E. answered that if they wanted to make a crossing-over area (bridge), they would need to do so; there would also be a substantial amount of trail work needed. Nagy questioned if there is a lot of flooding/water in the area and John E. replied that he has not noticed flooding in the area. He believes that there is enough of the old channel left to funnel any water out of the area. Nagy questioned if they are currently working with the Eastman Charitable Foundation and John replied that they are currently working on a grant request to that particular organization. Nagy also questioned what exactly they were asking for from the Commission and John replied that he was in attendance in order obtain “lessons learned” so that the OCC can learn about fundraising but also to become an active partner with GCC. Due to the fact that they are hoping this will be a community resource, he is hoping that the GCC will act as an active resource for this project. Chairman Hocker noted that depending on the timeline of the project, the GCC will likely be able to assist. Because of the current demands of the GCC it will need to be coordinated accordingly.

Wood mentioned that the decking from the new Brookside Park bridge was salvaged from Eastman. There are extra materials that may work for this particular project (Trex decking) and he could ask for permission to use these materials for the OCC’s project. Wood added that he chairs a committee in Eastman called Woodlands & Wildlife with people who enjoy doing trail work. When the time comes for the Outdoor Classroom Committee to need assistance with trail work, Wood can help send out a request for volunteers. Buchanan questioned what the timeline is for the outdoor classroom and John E. replied that they have currently raised 50% of the funds needed for the project and the Grantham School Board voted to approve the remaining 50% of the funds until the Outdoor Classroom Committee can fundraise enough money to reimburse them. Their goal is to have the outdoor classroom constructed by the end of this summer. Buchanan added that she believed that this is a very good collaboration for GCC; she also suggested that it would be a good idea to walk the trails and view the bridges to see the scope of work needed. John E. noted that he could also arrange an opportunity to do a walk-through of the area to see the walkways, bridges and trails. Kaszeta and Buchanan agreed that the GCC should schedule a tour to look at the area. Karen E. will work with the GCC to schedule a time to do this.

Buchanan mentioned Wood’s effort to create signs with QR codes as a potential idea for the OCC. Wood noted that the QR codes will be linked to the GCC webpage and GVS might be able to do something similar with their website. Nagy noted that the Byrne Foundation might be a good

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opportunity for funding and other Commission members agreed. Buchanan questioned if GCC might have any funding available for this project and Chairman Hocker noted that GCC will be beginning a new fiscal year beginning July 1. Funding may be available through the current use account but a decision will have to be made regarding this project later down the road. Ryan questioned if the OCC had considered where the current boards could be disposed, but they are currently unsure of where they will be disposed. Buchanan thanked the Eylanders for taking the initiative to work on this project.

Upper Valley Land Trust – Wood proposed a \$25 donation to gain a membership to this organization. Wood noted that the membership does not necessarily gain the GCC any additional benefits but that this is a good opportunity to be a part of the matching opportunity and to support this organization. Larrabee noted that he is in favor of the membership because this is a great organization and he has benefited from this membership in the past.

Chairman Hocker noted that he would entertain a motion to approve a donation to the Upper Valley Land Trust from the General Funds account.

Wood made a motion to contribute \$100 to the Upper Valley Land Trust.

Larrabee seconded the motion.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

OTHER BUSINESS

Brookside Park:

Trail Activities – Wood announced that he is in the process of revising and finalizing the trail signs. The lettering and font were updated to fix the “stretching” of the letters on the sign. He hopes that by the end of the week, these will be ready. Wood will stop by the Home Depot to purchase posts and will then walk the trail to place the posts in the appropriate places on the trails. Wood pulled up a map of the trail on his computer and questioned if any changes should be made to help decipher the difference between the trail and stone wall. Kaszeta noted that a key or legend would be helpful; Ryan added that if a legend wouldn’t work, the text “stone wall” could be added in order to clarify for people exactly what they were looking at. Discussion ensued regarding the options for labelling the stone walls. Wood added that since the creator of the map will be modifying the map anyway, perhaps it would be helpful to have him label the stone walls and also add a legend. Ryan added that there could be at least four options of what could be added to the legend (yellow trail, blue trail, stone wall, body of water). Ryan asked Wood to email a copy of the map to the Commission and Wood agreed. Chairman Hocker noted that the funding for this project has been approved and must be spent by the end of the fiscal year, which is June 30th. Hocker noted that he would check with Melissa regarding the necessity to expend the funds by the end of the year.

SCA Work – Nagy noted that the SCA crew will be arriving tomorrow at 9:30 a.m. Nagy and Hocker will meet the crew onsite. Nagy added that the work should be completed by July 1st.

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Bridge Construction – Kaszeta noted that since the last meeting, Barker Steel delivered the beams. There was a problem with the beams, which Barker Steel came back to correct. The riggers were also installed and there have been several build parties at the Park. The nailers are down and the blocking, decking, and uprights are in place. They have also started installing the railings on the bridge. For the most part, everything is ready for the SCA trail crew. There have been a few minor issues with the bridge; originally the plan was to install tension cables, but for various reasons this would not work. They did design adjustments to change these to full wooden railings. Kaszeta noted that he will likely have to spend an additional \$600 to accommodate this change. The bridge is sturdy and has been stress tested; Kaszeta noted that despite a tree accidentally falling on the bridge, it is intact and undamaged. It was noted that there were several photos taken and also a video of the SCA crew working on the project. Kaszeta then provided receipts in the amount of \$617.36 and officially asked for reimbursement for these expenses.

Chairman Hocker noted that he would entertain a motion to approve reimbursement to Kaszeta in the amount of \$617.36.

Ryan made a motion to approve reimbursement to Kaszeta in the amount of \$617.36.

Buchanan seconded the motion.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

Chairman Hocker noted that there was an additional purchase of washers that his wife made for the project. This expenditure will need to be approved separately from Kaszeta's expenditures. The cost of materials came to \$28.98.

Chairman Hocker noted that he would entertain a motion to approve reimbursement of the expenditure in the amount of \$28.98 to Renee Gustafson.

Larrabee made a motion to approve this reimbursement in the amount of \$28.98.

Buchanan seconded the motion.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

Chairman Hocker noted that there is currently an issue with the purchase of the stone dust. Jeff Hastings went to the park to pick up the load that was meant for the Park. When he arrived to pick up the load of stone, he noticed that the material there was not stone dust, it is trail pack. There are currently 80 tons of this material that they may or may not be able to use. Stone dust is a much finer material and much more expensive.

Ryan questioned if the SCA has been informed of the issue and Hocker confirmed that they have not. Hocker noted that what is currently sitting in the parking lot will work in the parking lot. Because what is currently there is usable, it may not be necessary to return all of this material. Wood questioned if the material could be used for the first layer of trail pack and Hocker agreed that the first 30 tons of material

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could potentially be used for this purpose. Chairman Hocker will continue to work to resolve this issue and to determine if GCC was charged the appropriate price considering which materials were delivered. Buchanan noted that contacting Twin Valley Sand & Gravel would be an appropriate first step in figuring out what happened. Nagy noted that the SCA crew chief will arrive tomorrow morning and may also be able to shed some additional light on the situation. Hocker referred to the cost spreadsheet and noted that GCC is in good shape with regard to the current use account.

Town Trail Maps – Wood noted that he received an email regarding the costs associated with the Trail Alliance Trail Finder trainings:

- Data collection training – 3 hours – use GPS unit to greatest potential
- Data manipulation – 12 hours
- Data entry training – 4 hours – introduction to entering information in the back end of the Trail Finder website
- Per trail page fee – \$250

Wood noted that it would be helpful to learn how to enter descriptions for various points of the trail. Unfortunately this entire process currently looks more complicated and expensive than originally suspected. Wood would like to get himself trained and potentially two others on the Eastman trails. Ryan asked if Eastman will go forward with the Eastman trail project, and Wood confirmed that as far as he knows, this is correct.

OTHER BOARD ACTIVITIES

Open Space Committee / Buchanan – The Dragonfly Children’s Program is being planned as a way of having a community activity to support open spaces in Grantham. Would the GCC be interested in co-sponsoring this event? The next meeting of the Open Spaces committee will be July 7th. Buchanan would also like input regarding how to craft the messaging for this particular event; respect for land use, habitats, etc. Wood noted that he agrees with the GCC co-sponsoring this event, but he believes that the event should be marketed as a family event or “all age” event rather than solely an event for children. Buchanan noted that this will be a good way to bring the public together and show the importance of preserving open spaces.

Chairman Hocker noted that he would entertain a motion to approve GCC co-sponsoring this event with the Open Space Committee.

Wood made a motion to approve.

Ryan seconded.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

Miller Pond Bridge update – Hocker announced that there has been substantial cutting done to Sherwood Forest since the implementation of the Forest Management Plan. Is this plan still a reflection

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of what can and should be done on the property? Chairman Hocker noted that the Selectman had their final review of the engineering proposal for the bridge. Bridge construction will commence this week. We may see an intent to cut sometime between now and the end of August. Hocker had a meeting with Jeremy Turner to ask if he would review the Forest Management Plan for a reasonable cost and issue some comments thereon. Hocker added that there is a second plan in place to do a cut on the Smith lot. When the Miller Pond bridge was closed, this plan was put on hold. It is now “back on the burner” for recommencement once the bridge work is complete. Hocker added that another subject of discussion was the addition of a chestnut orchard to the Town forest which Jeremy will help plan. He also commented that during a recent walk of the Sherwood Property, he noticed that the property is back on the market.

Wood noted that he is meeting with a spokesperson from Fish and Game tomorrow to walk the easement properties owned by Eastman. GCC members are welcome to join at 10:00 a.m. tomorrow at the end of Andersen Pond Rd. Wood also noted that the perambulation report is currently complete and will need to be signed off on by all members who were in attendance at the perambulation. This paperwork will be submitted to the Selectmen and then to the State.

Wood continued with a point for discussion – should something be done for Old Home Day to show people around Brookside Park? Ryan added that Andy Schmidt might like to be a part of this event. Nagy added that it would be important to do this prior to the parade along with a ribbon cutting ceremony. She would like to invite some members of the press as well. Nagy then noted that she would like the bridge to be dedicated to Kaszeta and Buchanan agreed. Kaszeta added that it would also be important to specify the Byrne Foundation’s funding of the project. Discussion ensued regarding the start time of tours and it was noted that it would be good to have tours start on the hour.

Hocker noted that there is also the issue of space in the parking lot, but the materials should be spread at that time. With respect to the run off, Hocker added that perhaps it can be diverted via a swail and then sent into a culvert alongside the road. Nagy mentioned that it would be important to make sure there is signage for handicapped usage and a handicapped parking spot in this parking lot. Buchanan noted that this is likely a Public Works issue and Larrabee confirmed that this is true.

Kaszeta noted that he has been contacted by two Boy Scouts regarding service projects; he forwarded the emails to Larrabee, who agreed to follow up.

Chairman Hocker noted that native brook trout can be found in Skinner Brook.

HANDOUTS / ACTIVITIES

Cost spreadsheet provided by Chairman Hocker

Receipts provided by Kaszeta

Receipt provided by Chairman Hocker on behalf of Renee Gustafson.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

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, July 18, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,



Nikki Arsenault, Secretary