

Minutes for the 26 Aug 2015 Alexandria Conservation Commission Meeting

Call meeting to Order: The meeting was called to order by Ernie Lamos at 18:35

Members present: George Whittaker, Jenny Tuthill, Steve Whitman, Bob Piehler, and Ernie Lamos; Alternates, Andrea Tuthill and Dave Chapman. There was nobody present as a representative from the BOS.

Absent: Don Gagnon

Note: Kate Barrett has resigned from the Commission. Dave Chapman acted on behalf of Kate Barrett; Andrea Tuthill acted on behalf of Don Gagnon. A motion was made by Jenny and 2nd by Bob to move Dave onto the Commission as a regular member to replace Kate; and, in view of Don's continued absents from meetings, to move Andrea Tuthill onto the Commission as a regular member to replace Don Gagnon; and change Don's status to that of Alternate. The motion was carried unanimously.

Financials: Operating: The 2015 operating budget balance as of 31 July 2015 was \$344.91. An additional \$580.00 is available to us, although not reflected in the budget due to a typographical error in the town budget. We have been assured these funds will be available to us when/if needed. The Conservation Fund had a balance of \$23,263.55 as of 31 July 2015 with an additional \$1,000 balance due from 2 properties recently removed from "current use".

Meeting Minutes: Minutes from 22 July; a motion to accept the minutes without change was made by Jenny and 2nd by George – motion carried unanimously. Approved copies will be sent to the Administrative assistant and replace all "draft copies".

Permits: Cole Hill Rd.; a minimal impact permit application was received for the ACC's consideration. Both the 'standard' and 'expedite' boxes have been checked, so it is not clear as to the ACC's role. However, it was agreed that members should review the application, visit the site, and be prepared to discuss the application. The feeling was that the Road Agent would like to begin work this fall. Members should contact Ernie to make arrangements to review the application.

Old Business

- The formal report detailing the walk-through visit to the town forest property by Dave Falkenham and Matt Tarr on 6/22/15 has not yet been received. Jenny followed up and was told that the report was mailed 6/24 to the Commission. The Commission never received the report. Jenny will contact Matt Tarr again to obtain a copy of the report.
- The research associated with the title search on the town forest property has been completed and we have received verbal confirmation that the town has clear title to the property. A formal report is being prepared which the town should have shortly.
- Further discussion and any action on work needing to be done to stabilize the banking along the brook caused by previous work done on Wadhams Rd. have not yet begun.
- Trout Unlimited reviewed a restoration project for the Patten Brook several months ago. Colin Lawson from Trout Unlimited has gotten back to us indicating that they are interested in working with the town on this project; however, they can't begin evaluating it until mid-September 2015 due to staffing constraints. Colin wants us to get back in touch after our September meeting. As there was no representative from the BOS at this meeting, Steve will be sure that the BOS are aware of the status.
- Due to pending decisions concerning the town forest, Ernie has delayed contacting Jeff Littleton, Moosewood Ecological to see if he has interest and the availability to complete the NRI in the Fowler River and Smith River watersheds; and if so, what the approximate cost would be. It was felt that the town forest should be our primary immediate concern, and that Ernie should contact Moosewood Ecological at a more appropriate time.

- “ACC minutes should be available for public review within 5 business days of the meeting.” Steve explained the process he currently tries to follow to meet the RSA requirements and have the minutes available in a timely manner. It was agreed that Commission members would review the minutes and respond back that they had reviewed the minutes and include any comments/corrections needed. The ‘draft copy’ of the minutes will be updated to include any comments/corrections and be available upon request within the 5 day business day period specified by the RSA; however, minutes will not be posted to the town website until approved at a regular ACC meeting.
- The Emerald Ash Borer has been detected in Belknap County and the quarantine on ash products extended. Four counties encompassing 99 cities and towns are now under quarantine to help contain this invasive beetle. It was felt that the ACC should take an active role in helping to inform and educate our residents about the serious threat this beetle poses. Several strategies were discussed and it was decided that Jenny and Dave would work on a plan and put something together for a presentation to the public in early October. Time is of the essence on this as the infestation is moving quickly across the state.
- The NHACC will hold its annual conference 7 Nov 2015 at the Pembroke Academy. For more information visit: <http://www.nhacc.org/annualmeeting45/>. Registration opens in September; anyone interested in attending should let Ernie know - ACC member’s registration fee and travel expenses will be reimbursed.

New Business

- An invoice for \$266.00 was received to renew our membership in the NHACC for 2016. A motion was made by Steve and 2nd by Bob to renew our membership for another year - motion carried unanimously.
- Jenny showed us some informational materials produced by the Meredith Conservation Commission showing information about town forest properties in their town. The single page “brochure” had a short history of the property on one side and a map of the area showing trails and points of interest on the reverse side. There was discussion about putting something like this together for our new town forest as well as for other conserved properties in the area. Jenny, Ernie, and Bob will work on putting something together. In conjunction with this, they will also develop a historical, informational pamphlet about the new town forest.
- Andrea suggested that we look into developing a facebook page for the ACC, perhaps with a link directly from the town website. A motion was made by Jenny and 2nd by Dave to have Andrea look into creating a facebook page for the ACC - motion carried unanimously.

Town Forest Update

The title search research has been completed and a formal report is being prepared. A preliminary discussion confirmed that the town does have clear title. Legal opinion has confirmed that the Commission can spend money from the conservation fund bank account to cover certain expenses related to the town forest; among them being surveying the property. To date we have requested estimates from 3 survey companies; 1 declined to bid, 1 has not yet responded, and 1 has given us an estimate of \$3,900 - \$4,400. Jenny will follow up with the company who has not yet responded. A motion was made by George and 2nd by Bob that the survey be paid for by the Commission using money from the Conservation Fund - motion carried unanimously. A motion was made by Jenny and 2nd by George that within 10 calendar days of receipt of clear title, a decision be made as to choice of survey company and a contract entered into, including payment of any required deposit - motion carried unanimously.

- Develop informational material about John Pittman Town Forest. See New Business, item #2 above.
- Establish action plan for town forest development; do we need to separate committee to do this? Discussion on this issue deferred to September meeting.
- Define role of BOS and ACC in the development of town forest property; major consideration should be to define start-up cost funding. Discussion on this issue deferred to September meeting.

Other Business

There being no further business brought before the Commission, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Steve and 2nd by Bob – motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 20:35. Our next scheduled meeting is September 23rd at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted

Steve Whitman, Secretary
Alexandria Conservation Commission