

Minutes for the August 25, 2021 Alexandria Conservation Commission Meeting

Call meeting to order at 18:34 by Chair Jennifer Tuthill

Members Present: Jennifer Tuthill, Merry Ruggirello, Tom Guilmette, , Rosie Homer Audrey West, and Steve Whitman (remote)

Excused: George Whittaker and Ernest Lamos

Absent: Ron Maclean

BOS Representative: Bob Piehler

Alternate Tom Guilmette was designated to represent Ernest Lamos. Alternate Rosie Homer was designated to represent George Whittaker.

Guests: None

- ❖ Approve minutes from the 26 July 2021 mtg. Motion to accept minutes was made by Bob and 2nd by Tom. ***Minutes were accepted as presented.***
- ❖ Financials: **2021 Operating Budget. Balance as of 25 August 2021 was \$1,029.00**
- ❖ Permits: **None**

Old Business:

1. Status of Town Forest Management Plan: Ernie and Merry will meet in January to work on a plan. Audrey West suggested accessing plans by other towns with TF management plans to develop language and structure for ours. They agreed that this would be part of their plan. Meeting has not been held; however, once the vacancy is filled, and the road to the Town Forest is more accessible a meeting will be convened, and a plan developed. Ernie has been reviewing plans from other towns. Ernie reported that no meeting has taken place as yet, but he and Merry plan to meet before the June 30 mtg. Ernie has resigned from the committee for personal reasons and has been replaced by Tom Guilmette. Tom and Merry will meet prior to our next scheduled mtg. Ernie will continue serving on the Commission as our Vice Chairman. **Mission statement and major objectives have been developed. It was agreed that for now these would suffice and there was no need for a lengthy management plan. A copy of this document is attached as read into the record*.**
2. Status of repainting boundary markers at the Town Forest: after discussion, it was decided to have a TF community activity in April specifically to mark the TF boundaries. This activity will fall under the 2021 major projects and will include working with AmeriCorps volunteers in clearing and maintaining trails, creating new trails, and designating boundary markers. Informational signage will also be addressed but will probably fall outside of the work done by AmeriCorp volunteers. Jennifer has spoken with Andrew Veilleux and dates have been firmed up. Two commission members are needed for each of those dates. The new boundary trail still needs work and to be 'blazed'. AmeriCorp volunteers are here until October and Jennifer will see if they are available to complete the job. **Town residents Tom Larson and Kim Sharp completed work needed and AmeriCorp volunteers were not involved (our thanks to Tom and Kim). The summer projects at the Town Forest have been completed. Maintenance will continue and periodic ACC sponsored events will be held – no logging activity on the property is planned.**
3. Status of the Photo contest. It was agreed to hold the contest from 15 April to 30 September so that calendars can be ready for sale by Thanksgiving. Theme of 2021 contest is "Exploring Alexandria through Photography". **Submission will be accepted through the end of September.**
4. Status of Preservation plan for Barrett Park. The ACC was tasked with developing a plan for the area known as Barrett Park and present it to the Select Board for their consideration and endorsement. **It was agreed that the**

preservation plan Barrett Park will be incorporated into the larger overall plan for the entire bog area. The kiosk will be relocated to the Town Forest.

5. Status of the Brainstorming session. Jennifer lead discussion on recent findings and her interaction with Fish & Game regarding those findings. It was concluded by the Commission based on the conference call and further discussion and research that the 'management plan' for Barrett Park should be a 'management plan' for the entire Alexandria Bog and include a wide variety of strategies and supportive activities. It was agreed that a special mtg. would be held to conduct a brainstorming session to develop ideas for both strategies and needed activities to include; communication/education needs and core issues covered in a management plan. **Session has been scheduled for 27 September 2021 at 18:00.**

New Business

1. Update on new developments regarding a plan for Barrett Park and the Alexandria Bog. **See #5 above**
2. NH Bio Blitz program sponsored by NHU Extension in September 2021 – Audrey West. **ACC will sponsor an event at the Town Forest at 1:00pm, Sunday, September 12th using inaturalist technology. The technology will be explained for those not already familiar with it, followed by hike through the Town Forest.**
3. All other new business to be considered by the Commission at this meeting.
 - a. **A motion was made by Steve and 2nd by Bob to draft a warrant for consideration designating lot #55 (owned by the town) as a "Town Forest". The motion was passed unanimously. The land abuts the bog and is primarily wetlands and unbuildable. Steve and Audrey will coordinate the project.**

There being no other new business, the meeting was adjourned by Jennifer Tuthill at 20:02. Our next meeting will be 29 September 2021, at the Alexandria Village School.

***Alexandria New Hampshire Town Forest Management Plan - August 2021**

The purpose of this plan is to layout the groundwork to protect and allow town use of the 53.05 acres of the Pitman Town Forest located off Hutchins Hill Road in Alexandria, NH.

Since a vote in March 2015 to establish the Pitman lot as a town forest, the Alexandria Conservation Commission was assigned as its stewards. Well-marked trails have been cut throughout the piece of land and along its boundary. Small brooks, slight slopes and lack of rocks make the forest a great place to explore, for any age. The property provides visitors outdoor activities such as hiking, dog walking, trail running, wildlife viewing, plant and tree identification opportunities, xc skiing, and snowshoeing.

Town forest education for residents on both its outdoor appeal and its historic past are important for the future of the property. Remnants of late John Pitman's living residence and abandoned decomposing log piles provide an interesting story and point of interest.

Helping Alexandria residents find the trailhead with road and trail signs, keeping the access road drivable and providing a parking area will be important for visitors in the future.