

Minutes from July 27, 2022 Alexandria Conservation Commission Meeting

Call Meeting to Order: Meeting called to order at 18:30 by Jennifer Tuthill

Members present: Jennifer Tuthill, Merry Ruggirello, Rosie Homer, Tom Guilmette, and Steve Whitman (remote from CT)

Excused:

Absent: Ernie Lamos

BOS Representative: Bob Piehler

Guests: Douglas Sirotnak

Approve Minutes from 30 May 25, 2022 Meeting: **Merry made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, 2nd by Bob. Minutes were approved unanimously.**

Financials: 2022 Operating Budget Balance **as of June 2, 2022 was \$1061.92.**

There is no money due the Commission as the result of property being removed from "current use" status.

Permits: None

Old Business

1. Status of movement by DES on any of the three issues regarding wetlands.

- **Erin Darrow has been contacted several times regarding the topic but still has not responded. Contact with DES has also resulted in calls not returned. The Commission has done all it can do at this point.**

2. Status of survey for Turtle Preserve lot, and new Town Forest lot: Colin Brown has agreed to put surveying of these plots on his schedule for this summer. He will look into what information he needs and get back to us with an estimate as to the costs. To date, Colin has not gotten back to us. A reminder of our request was left on his phone message June 11, 2022.

- **Nothing further has been heard from Colin and it is assumed that he will contact us when he has the time to do the survey.**

3. Discussion of management plan for the Turtle Preserve; currently, maintenance is scheduled for November, which will involve cutting grasses, tending brush and soil in the Preserve area per directions from Josh Megyesy of NH Fish and Game. This is still our schedule plan. Volunteers will be requested in November for help with maintenance.

- **Josh still intends to complete the catch and release study to track the turtle activity in the area; however, the study has not yet been started and no specific start date has been set. The ACC will continue to keep in contact with Josh.**

4. Status of Game cameras in Preserve- after discussion, it was decided that Tom G. will research types and prices of cameras that would be appropriate for the Preserve area and Pittman Town Forest. Two cameras in the Preserve area can be set low, and on a timer to catch nesting turtles at work. It was

decided that we could utilize four cameras in all, two in the Preserve to catch active nesting with a 3rd up a tree viewing main the area (per police recommendation), and one camera for the Pittman Town Forest. One camera has been purchased, with placement in the preserve along with one owned by the Tuthills. A third has been placed up a tree in the Pittman Town Forest. These have all resulted in helpful photos and videos of our town properties. It would be well worth our while to purchase the additional two suggested cameras, as the Tuthill would like to use their own camera on their own property in the near future.

- **A motion was made by Jenny and 2nd by Steve to purchase two (2) additional cameras similar to the one previously purchased (total cost estimated to be < \$500.00). The motion passed unanimously - placement will be determined upon receipt.**

5. Status of Conservation Easements for Preserve plot, and new Town Forest plot: A long discussion was held regarding the pros and cons for taking this step. It was moved by Bob Piehler and 2nd by Ernie Lamos that we look into the details involved in putting land into easements. All were in favor. Jenny will gather information from local organizations and individuals for possible grant help as well as interest in holding easements. In order to meet acreage requirements, the new TF plot may require 10 acres total. If so, the idea of purchasing 2 acres from the adjacent lot owned by Chet Walker was suggested Jenny has handouts for members regarding different Conservation Easement scenarios. It is understood that until we get our land surveyed, no solid steps can be taken but we must be well educated about those steps in advance.

- **Surveys of the properties needed, and discussion is needed concerning the specific type of easement(s) are needed to best suit our purposes. See item #2 above.**

6. Roadside litter pickup will continue be held the 1st Saturday of each month. Volunteers will meet at 10 a.m. at the Municipal Building parking lot. Time change from previous announced meeting is due to the fact that the banner we hang in the transfer station says 10.a.m. Bags and buckets are provided. In June, only one person showed up for the pickup, and it was cancelled. The July pick-up was cancelled due to lack of participation.

- **There was considerable discussion about lack of participation and the reasons why, and it was decided to try alternate days to see if that would make it more convenient for people to participate. Our scheduled pick-up date at 10:00, 8/6 is still planned; however, those who would find 8/2 or 8/3 more convenient, can meet at 10:00 at the Municipal Building. Changes in the pick-up schedule will be considered depending on the results of the "multi-day" alternative option. Remember, anyone can help, you don't have to be a Commission member.**

7. Status of Kiosk re-erecting: Tom, Bob and Rosie all volunteered to start by trying to shovel post holes for the kiosk. Jenny and Tom began the test holes; Rosie completed the task and has dug two very deep and workable holes for the kiosk. On June 3, Jenny and three other elderly volunteers went to erect the kiosk. We found it was too heavy for these four people to lift. We will need six or seven strong individuals to lift it up, and carry it the distance to the holes. Committee members are asked to help locate people who can do this. A date for this activity needs to be set asap.

- **It was decided that in addition to manual labor, mechanical equipment was need. Various Commission members offered to contact people they knew with tractors capable of lifting and**

placing the kiosk. It was also agreed that payment for this service would be in order. A date and time will be published once the details are worked out.

8. Update on Dan Moore, who due to health issues will be unable to continue to work with us in the future – his replacement if any? To date this has not had any follow up.

- **There has been no indications that Dan will be replaced. The Commission wishes to thank Dan for his help and wish him our very best as he manages his health issues**

9. Status of naming of the new town forest lot to honor George Whittaker and ordering a permanent sign with the wording “George Whittaker Town Forest”. Ernie has discussed this with George and he approves. The naming proposal was brought to the select board and approved. Steve Whitman has offered to create a sign, and if lacking the time this month the committee must approve expenditure for a commercially made sign, which is estimated to be around \$80.

- **Steve was unable to complete the signage and the Jenny made the motion, 2nd by Merry to purchase two (2) metal signs formatted as illustrated (actual font size to be determined by purchaser) Motion passed unanimously.**

**GEORGE WHITTAKER
TOWN FOREST
Alexandria**

11. Josh Megyesy contacted Jenny in late May, indicating he would be visiting Alexandria in the coming week., and would be in touch. No further contact has occurred to date. **See #3 above.**

12. There were no proposed changes to the current Bylaws, so no action is needed. **Item closed without discussion.**

New Business

1. Vote on proposed slate of officers for the year 2022 – 2023. These individuals have been acting in this capacity since 30 April 2022 pending an official vote.

a. Chairman: Jennifer Tuthill

b. Vice Chairman: Ernest Lamos

c. Secretary: Steve Whitman

- **Slate of officers for 2022 -2023 was approved unanimously. It was agreed that in Steve’s absents or inability to record notes from a remote location, Merry Ruggirello will record the meeting minutes and distribute the draft copy to Commission members and Alternates and make them available to the public upon request within 5 business days of the meeting.**

2. Due to the trespassing seen on the turtle preserve cameras, at the May meeting a motion was made (Merry) seconded (Tom), and approved, to purchase additional signage to deter foot traffic. Signs to read “Stop: no foot traffic permitted in area”. The committee forgot to decide how many signs? Alexandria Road crew suggest 4. Additionally, we have been asked by members of the public to please put up “Caution Turtle Crossing” signs along Bog Road, and at the bridge on Town Pound Road. Jenny has received 7 emails addressing turtle crossing concerns.

- At the May meeting, Merry made the motion 2nd by Tom that we purchase signs “Stop no foot traffic permitted in area”. At the July meeting an amendment was added to the motion by Jenny 2nd by Steve specifying the number of signs at four (4) and adding three (3) new “Caution turtle crossing” signs. Size and exact format is at the discerssion of the purchaser. Motion was again discussed and passes unanimously.

The Commission wishes to thank the town Highway Dept. for their strong support of our conservation initiatives and their proactive assistance. The Town Road crew has already decided NOT to do any road maintenance on Bog Road shoulders until November, due to the number of turtles seen nesting in the sand along the road.

3. All other new business brought forth not included in formal agenda:

- There was a brief discussion about concerns over a possibly contaminated pond on private property and it was determined that unless there was clear evidence of contamination to surrounding properties or public water shed, there was really nothing the Commission could do. The suggestion was made, that if an abutting property owner approach the Commission, we should advise them to contact the DES themselves.

Meeting adjourned at 19:31. Our next meeting will be 31 August 2022, mark your calendars now.