

Atkinson Conservation Commission Minutes
Wednesday, October 26, 2022, 7:00 PM
Atkinson Town Hall

Approved November 30, 2022

Members Present:

Paul Wainwright, Chair
Bill Steele, Vice Chair
John Fournier, Secretary
Suzie Newman
Pete McVay
Scott Kukshel
Monique Chrétien, Alternate

Others Present:

1. Call to Order, and Attendance:

Chair Paul Wainwright called the meeting to order in person at Atkinson Town Hall at 7:00PM on Wednesday, October 26th, 2022. Chair Wainwright took attendance and all members are present except for Member Nenart, Alternate Member Chrétien will be voting in his stead.

2. Review & Approval of Minutes

a. September 28th, 2022 - Public

Discussion: Chair Wainwright presented the regular meeting minutes from September 28th, 2022 and asked for comments or corrections, there were none.

Vice Chair Steele made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from 09/28/2022, as written. Member Newman seconded the motion. Members McVay & Kukshel abstained from the motion because they were not present. Vote: 5/0/2, the motion carried.

3. Budget Report

Chair Wainwright stated that the Commission is in fine condition when it comes to the 2022 operating budget. Chair Wainwright read off a few recent expenditures, including the recording clerk's fees, the NHACC dues for 2023, and postage for sending letters regarding the timber harvest. Chair Wainwright stated that he spoke with Jim Lavoie about the mowing of the fields and he plans on mowing this coming weekend. Chair Wainwright continued that Mr. Lavoie requested a pay increase to accommodate for the rising fuel costs and they

agreed on a ten percent increase. Chair Wainwright continued that the mowing costs will now come to \$1,023.00.

Chair Wainwright stated that both of the Commission's chainsaws are in the shop, so this will be at least \$200.00 to repair the automatic oilers. Chair Wainwright stated that there are nine attendees going to the NHACC Conference. Chair Wainwright encouraged carpooling, and made the Members aware that they may submit for mileage reimbursement as well. Chair Wainwright mentioned some signage costs that may be necessary at the end of Boulder Cove Road; more discussion to follow. Chair Wainwright stated that the Commission also recently paid for the "Trails Closed for Timber Harvest" signage.

Chair Wainwright stated that with all the aforementioned costs accounted for, the Commission still has about \$2,000 left in this year's annual operating budget. Member McVay asked how the Commission should use these funds before the end of the year and lose them. Chair Wainwright stated that he has a few past expenses that were not reimbursed, but does not have any projects in mind for the funding. Vice Chair Steele stated that some of the funds could be used for signs but that will be discussed later. Member Fournier suggested trail intersection signage.

4. Land Conservation Plan Review & Final Approval

Chair Wainwright stated that there were two things in the Plan document that changed in the last month. Chair Wainwright continued that the first change was to include a photograph in memory of his wife Judy, which all Members had previously agreed to. Chair Wainwright stated that the second change came after Karen McFadden emailed and asked why the open space at the Atkinson Country Club hadn't been included in the Plan. The Commission had a brief discussion that although the Country Club accounts for 221 acres of Dedicated Open Space land, which has mostly been clear cut, planted with grass, and used as the golf course. Chair Wainwright stated that although this clear-cut land is good for recreational purposes, it is not necessarily good for conservation purposes. Chair Wainwright continued that he believes that the Commission would be justified in not including the Country Club's open space in the Plan. Chair Wainwright stated that he did, however, make a note in the table in Appendix B to acknowledge that the Commission has not forgotten about the Country Club's open space. Chair Wainwright continued that he would include a map of the Country Club's open space and include it in the Plan.

Chair Wainwright stated that he went to Hampstead Print & Copy to get a price to print five copies of the Plan. Member Newman asked where the plans would be; Chair Wainwright stated: one in the Land Use Office, one in the Selectmen's Office, one in the library, one copy as a floating/loaner copy, and one loose-leaf copy for the Commission.

Chair Wainwright stated that he also has an invoice from Julie LaBranche, who originally was going to charge a little over \$2,000.00, but she ran over since this was a particularly tough plan to complete. Chair Wainwright continued that Ms. LaBranche was over budget by about \$1,000.00. Chair Wainwright stated that with the grant funding, there was not any extra funding aside from the \$440.00 to print the Plan, which is what he offered her for fair compensation for the extra work she put in. Chair Wainwright continued that Ms. LaBranche's invoice was for \$2,520.00, which is the exact amount left in the Moose Plate Grant budget.

Member McVay made a motion to approve and accept Julie LaBranche's invoice in the amount of \$2,520.00 to be paid from the Conservation Fund. Member Fournier seconded the motion. Vote: 7/0/0, the motion carried.

Chair Wainwright stated that he also has the invoice from the NHACC for conference tuition in the amount of \$540.00, and asked for a motion to approve.

Member Kukshtel made a motion approve and accept the NHACC invoice in the amount of \$540.00 for tuition to the annual conference, and to pay it from the annual operating budget. Member Newman seconded the motion. Vote: 7/0/0, the motion carried.

Member Kukshtel made a motion to publish the Town of Atkinson Land Conservation Plan, as presented. Vice Chair Steele seconded the motion. Vote: 7/0/0, the motion carried.

5. Short Reports & Discussions

a. Lang Parcel Acquisition Update

Chair Wainwright stated that things are going well business-wise. Chair Wainwright continued that there was a cleanup effort to remove a fence that encroached on the land, and to remove some landscaping ties, identified as hazardous waste. Chair Wainwright continued that the fence and landscaping ties were successfully removed. Chair Wainwright stated that the ARM Fund committee conducted a successful site walk.

Chair Wainwright continued that he is starting to work with Sally Manikian from The Conservation Fund organization about a Purchase & Sales agreement from TCF to the Town. He continued that part of the ARM Fund's requirements includes having a conservation easement held by a third-party, so Duane Hyde from the Southeast Land Trust was also a part of this walk, and was impressed by it.

b. ADA Trail Update

Chair Wainwright stated that the contract has been approved for the first phase of the ADA-compliant trail on the Slade Town Forest. Chair Wainwright continued that he will soon be meeting with David Jordan and Bob White, who will be working on this planning project, to show them the land.

c. Fall Mowing of Fields

Member Chrétien asked why these fields are mowed; Chair Wainwright stated that the mowing is done so that these areas do not turn back into a forest. This is done to maintain a diversity of wildlife habitat in town.

d. Selective Timber Harvest Update

Chair Wainwright stated that he has no update on this project at this time. Chair Wainwright continued that the permits have been approved, the trees have been marked, and he is just waiting to hear when the loggers will arrive to begin the work. Chair Wainwright stated that the trees have been marked to separate them into three categories; saw timber, cord wood, and wood chips.

e. Update on Encroachments: 4 Stickney Road, and Boulder Cove Road

Chair Wainwright stated that he has minimal updates on these encroachments. Chair Wainwright continued that the fence on Stickney Road is still there, and the Code Enforcement Officer is working to resolve this issue. Chair Wainwright stated that with the Boulder Cover Road boat trailer issue, the Highway Agent suggested better signage to prevent this from happening. Chair Wainwright produced a few signs he had on hand, including trail signage, no dumping signage, and Atkinson Conservation Land signage. Chair Wainwright stated that since there are some funds left in the budget, it would be a good time to order some new signs which have some general rules listed on them. The Commission had a brief discussion around what the new signs should say; Members McVay and Newman agreed to come up with a few items that can be listed on the new signs.

f. Easement Monitoring Update – Bill, John, Monique

Chair Wainwright stated that Commission is responsible for monitoring easements in Town, including the Caroline Orr Town Forest and the Williams #4 land just north of the Marshall Town Forest. Vice Chair Steele produced a checklist he found online to help guide the monitoring

activities. The Commission discussed when they could complete this effort and how to complete the online certification of this monitoring activity.

g. Troop 9 News

Vice Chair Steele stated that he does not have any updates at the moment.

h. Turtle Signs Proposal – Monique

Alternate Chrétien stated that in August she began having conversations about having the culvert on north Maple Avenue improved for the benefit of the turtle crossing. Ms. Chrétien continued that she is still working on the culvert effort. She asked the Commission if they'd be in favor of posting signage to warn drivers of crossing turtles; they were in favor of a seasonal sign in this area. Chair Wainwright asked if a sandwich board sign would be better than a sign on a post; the Commission agreed that a permanent sign would be better because it wouldn't be able to fall over. Chair Wainwright stated that the Selectmen would need to approve posting a sign on a public road, and the Highway Agent would need to put it up. Alternate Chrétien stated that she will work to order these signs and then speak with the Highway Agent regarding what it would take to get the signs posted.

i. Work Day on Stickney Proposal – Denise

Chair Wainwright stated that there is a floating dock that have been deteriorating slowly over many years. Chair Wainwright continued that the water level is currently low and these docks and debris are accessible. Chair Wainwright suggested a site walk to figure out what needs to be done. Members Newman and Fournier agreed to help by inspecting the area and coming up with a plan.

j. Tree Down on Orr Town Forest

Chair Wainwright stated that there is a tree down on the Orr Town Forest. Member Fournier stated that he would clear this when he has time.

k. Thoughts For What to Include in the November Town Newsletter

Chair Wainwright stated that last month he posted that the Land Conservation Plan draft was available for public comments, and he only received the one email from Karen McFadden regarding the aforementioned open space at the Atkinson Country Club. Chair Wainwright continued that he feels compelled to post something in the November newsletter regarding the upcoming timber harvest although he still does not have a start date. Chair Wainwright stated that he might post that the Land Conservation Plan is now complete.

I. Other Business

Member Fournier discussed the email he sent concerning the new Town website, and asked the Members to review and comment. Member Fournier stated that there is a lot of functionality in the Town's new website that he'd like to utilize if possible. The Commission discussed the features of the Commission's website and the possibilities available.

6. **Next Meetings: Proposal to move the November meeting to November 30 at 7:00PM, and cancel the December 28 meeting unless it is absolutely necessary to vote on something. The Commission agreed on both.**
7. **Carpooling? NH ACC Annual Conference will be Saturday, November 5, 2022**
8. **Adjournment**

Member McVay made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Chrétien seconded the motion. Vote: 7/0/0

The meeting adjourned by consensus at 8:22PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Zachary Gilberti, Recording Clerk