

Atkinson Conservation Commission Minutes
Monday, March 4, 2019
Atkinson Town Hall

Approved April 1, 2019

Members Present:

Paul Wainwright, Chair
Denise Legault, Vice Chair
Pete McVay, Secretary
Dan Kimball
Scott Kukshel
Dennis Krause
Jeff Nenart, Alternate (not voting)
Tim Dziechowski, Alternate (voting)

Others Present:

Adam Torris
Charlie Guisnard
John Troy
Karen Steele

1) Call to order, attendance

Chair Wainwright called the meeting to order at 7:33 PM, Monday, March 4, 2019. Chair Wainwright reviewed the attendance list and declared that a quorum was present.

2) Review and approval of minutes: February 4, 2019

Chair Wainwright requested a motion to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2019 public meeting of the Atkinson Conservation Commission, as amended.

Member McVay made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2019 public session of the Atkinson Conservation Commission, as amended. Member Legault seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously except for Scott Kukshel, who abstained because he was not at the February meeting. 6/0/1

3) Treasurer's report

Chair Wainwright presented the current Treasurer's Report, and explained that changes from the previous month were highlighted. There was no discussion.

4) Barry Conservation Camp – Scholarship Applicant

Chair Wainwright asked Mr. Troy if any scouts were interested in attending the Junior Conservation Officer program at the Barry Conservation Camp, August 4 – 7, 2019. Mr. Troy stated that he did not know. Chair Wainwright stated that he had requested the Scouts to inform the Conservation Commission of any interest by March 4, 2019. If no scouts were interested, the Conservation Commission would have to either release the slot or open it up

to a wider audience. Mr. Troy said that he would email Scout Master Flieder to ask him to confirm whether there was any interest.

Chair Wainwright then asked the Commission if this scholarship should be opened to the community at large. There was a consensus that, if no Scouts were interested, it would be appropriate to offer the scholarship to the Atkinson community at large.

5) Eagle Scout Proposals

Troop 9 Scout Adam Torris expressed interest in improving the Atkinson Canoe/Kayak Launch by replacing decking on the dock, and organizing parking, because the current parking is very confusing. Chair Wainwright stated that there is a neighbor who is parking in the town's parking space, and this has been a problem for many years. Mr. Torris stated that there is also a bench that he would like to replace with a new, more permanent bench possibly overlooking the water. Member McVay made a suggestion of a tripod type bench. Mr. Torris also expressed interest in placing informational signage, including on Route 111. Member Dziechowski cautioned that the bench has a history, and it should not be tampered with until the parties that placed it are spoken to. Member McVay stated that he believes the residents across the street maintain the area, have planted flowers, and have placed the bench there.

Chair Wainwright stated that it is possible that he may get a surveyor to mark the boundaries. Mr. McVay stated that was already done and Mr. Wainwright stated that the lot line markers are not obvious. Mr. Nenart volunteered to mark the lines, and Chair Wainwright said he would send him the survey.

Mr. Torris stated that he would also like to evaluate the gravel to see if that needs to be replaced. Chair Wainwright asked Mr. Torris if he had a budget, and what his timeline would be. Mr. Torris stated that he feels it would be a spring project, and is planning to ask his Troop to help with the project. He feels it would take approximately 10 people to complete the project. Chair Wainwright stated that the Conservation Commission would probably be able to purchase the gravel and suggested that Mr. Torris contact Road Agent Ted Stewart to assist in hauling and dumping the gravel. Chair Wainwright also stated that he has the stencils for the parking berms that the Troop can use. All members of the Commission were in consensus with what Mr. Torris would like to do. Chair Wainwright invited Mr. Torris back to next month's meeting to discuss his budget, his plan, and what assistance he needs from the Conservation Commission.

Chair Wainwright then turned the floor over to Scout Charlie Guisnard to inform the Commission as to what his project is. Mr. Guisnard showed the Commission his plans for improving the "outside classroom" of the Atkinson Academy. He will be planting rhododendrons to form a barrier between the street and their outside classroom. Mr. Guisnard informed the Commission that the Night Owls offered to pay for his project, so he will not need funding from the Commission.

Member Kimball asked Mr. Troy if the Scouts were planning on camping on the Bonin field behind Forest Rd. Mr. Troy stated they don't have it on their calendar, when they tried to

camp there last year, he stated there were an extraordinary number of ticks. Member Kimball stated that he was planning to mow if they were going to camp there. Member Kukshel suggested that the Scouts use toilet paper rolls with permethrin soaked cotton. The field mice will take the cotton to their nests and the permethrin will kill the ticks, but will not harm the mice.

Chair Wainwright thanked the Scouts for participating in the meeting.

6) Proposals for Shovel-Ready Eagle Scout Projects

Chair Wainwright asked the Commission to brainstorm some project ideas for the Eagle Scouts. Member Dziechowski suggested a project for the Chadwick Town Forest Bridge. Chair Wainwright thought that the Chadwick Forest Bridge was in good condition, but Chadwick Forest could stand to be blazed out to Merrill Drive. Vice Chair Legault asked about the markings on the Marshall land. Member McVay stated that markings don't last long. Chair Wainwright asked if that needs to be re-blazed, Vice Chair Legault said they do. Member McVay suggested a walk on all our trails to be sure the blazes are there. Chair Wainwright stated that they did a good job on Sawyer and on the southern part of the Sawmill Swamp trail. Member Nenart stated that the original material was still there.

Member Nenart asked if there was anything significant historically in any of our Town Forests, and suggested to catalog historical material, and put up signs. Member McVay suggested that if the Scouts were interested, they can research and update general information in GRANIT, such as what kinds of trees we have, endangered species, etc. Chair Wainwright explained to the Scouts that were present what the GRANIT database is, and suggested they make a project to see exactly what is on the database pertaining to Atkinson.

Member Krause suggested that the Sawyer Bridges be repaired. He reported that the bridges and planks have been damaged due to ATVs. There was discussion as to how the town might deter ATV use on this land. Member McVay stated he put a book in the library that describes various types of bridges.

Karen Steele said the blazes stop on the Sawmill South trail. Chair Wainwright corrected her and said they do not stop and explained the different color blazes. Ms. Steele also suggested town markers. She also stated that there are no geocaches in Sawyer, but there are several behind the Community Center, Chair Wainwright added that to the list.

Member Dziechowski mentioned the entrance to Woodlawn Avenue. Chair Wainwright stated that there have been significant improvements there over the past year, including parking and greatly improved signage, and that there is no immediate opportunity for an Eagle project there.

Chair Wainwright stated that the Chadwick kiosk has been vandalized and would like to have it be repaired – another possible Eagle project?

Member Kukshel suggested interpretive trail maps with information about what is there.

7) Page Farm Update

At last month's Planning Board meeting, they determined that no variance is required for the cutting and excavation currently proposed in the buffer between their project and the Town Forest. Chair Wainwright feels there was some improvement with the latest plan, but is still not happy with the plan to use the buffer in this way.

Chair Wainwright asked Mr. Nenart to explain the two storm water retention areas called bio-retention areas and a pond outlet structures that seem to take overflow out of the retention area and drain it into the wetlands. He asked Mr. Nenart if that was normal and Mr. Nenart confirmed that it was normal. They are made to hold water and leach into the ground and would overflow only in a bad storm.

Chair Wainwright is concerned about the overflow outlet going directly into the wetland. Member Nenart explained that sediment will leach out, so in theory the water will be semi-treated before it gets to the wetland.

Chair Wainwright questioned the trail access. He wanted to be sure there is an easement in the deed that states that trail access will be supplied. He also wants to be sure there will be parking available outside the wall.

Chair Wainwright also updated the Commission that the State is still looking at the endangered and threatened species in that area. They have not yet given a ruling if they will be granting an Alteration of Terrain permit. Alternate Nenart asked if the State rules that there is an endangered species in that area, if the project can be stopped. Chair Wainwright stated that he thinks it would be. He informed them that the State is upset that this is a new application to them, the original plan did not have them looking at this particular area because there was no plan for it to be developed, but now there is. Both the Spotted turtle and the Blanding's turtle use the upland area around the wetland as their breeding territory. He stated that the turtles go back to the same spot each year.

Vice Chair Legault asked what the re-vegetation plan will be. Chair Wainwright explained that Town Engineer Steve Keach was very responsive to his questions about the re-vegetation plan. He stated that they will re-plant the slope, but doubts that it will ever return to being a mature forest because of the proximity of the houses. The Commission is also concerned about bittersweet invading the forest.

8) Land Conservation Planning Working Group

Chair Wainwright stated that he has updated the Land Conservation Resource documents. He stated that he has three new maps. He merged the 24 tax maps into one document. He highlighted parcels listed in the Cluster Open Space table. He also has another map of Current Use parcels. Karen McFadden asked at a previous meeting if there was a discount if public access was allowed. She subsequently researched it, and there is a discount if public access is allowed. Chair Wainwright stated there are approximately 6-8 Current Use lands that have public access.

Karen Steele asked for the definition of “Town Forest,” and whether this is synonymous with “conservation land.” Ms. Steele asked if this was different from people who donate land to be conservation land. Chair Wainwright explained the map color coding, and how the map displays the various types of “conservation” land.

Member Krause asked the definition of Cluster/Open Spaces. Chair Wainwright stated that it is never to be built, but set aside only to satisfy a Zoning ordinance that allows the developer to build more units in another place if they left a chunk of space vacant. No public access is allowed for any of the town’s Cluster Open Space lands.

Chair Wainwright went on to list other updates he has placed on the Resource Documents web page.

Chair Wainwright asked whether the Commission thinks we can realistically do a Land Conservation Plan by ourselves. Having looked at similar plans from other towns, Chair Wainwright’s concern is that we do not have qualified people to do such a plan on our own. Member McVay stated that when the Commission was looking to preserve Page Farm, there were quite a few townspeople that were willing to assist. Chair Wainwright feels that such a plan is very technical, and feels this may have to be “hired out.” Member Kukshel asked when the next master plan is scheduled. Vice Chair Legault stated that she thought it was being updated on a rolling basis. Member Kukshel feels that our work to produce a Land Conservation Plan could be part of updating the Master Plan.

Chair Wainwright asked for topics that need to be looked into, and the Commission contributed the following:

- 1) What’s the purpose of the plan, and who is the audience?
- 2) List of criteria if a piece of land is to be purchased, and how do we set priorities?
- 3) Parcels of land in town sorted by lot size
- 4) What are our objectives? Acquisition vs. Improve existing use of land? Others? Goals
→ objectives → strategy
- 5) Reflect the desires of the community
- 6) Varieties of methods: Buy land/Easements/Donations/Bargain Sales

Mr. Troy asked if the Land Conservation Plan shouldn’t reflect what the desires of the community are. Chair Wainwright pointed out there is a Community Survey in the master plan. Chair Wainwright explained that Land Conservation is not just about trying to purchase as much land as we can for as little as possible. On a broader scale, it is about getting people to take care of open spaces, and looking for ways to get easements on land. Also, to let people know that it is possible to make donations. He also explained what a “bargain sale” is, and how it could fit into achieving the town’s conservation goals.

Member McVay stated that the Commission should be more proactive than reactive and emphasized the importance of having a plan when going after obtaining grants.

Member Kukshel stated that the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) from 2011 has a list of recommendations on protecting natural resources, surface waters, etc. The Commission feels that this NRI needs to be updated.

Chair Wainwright feels that the next steps should be that Julie LaBranche has offered to give a presentation of how a Land Conservation Plan should be put into place. He also stated that if the Board would like to hire Rockingham Planning Commission, they would need to come up with the funds. He cautioned that this would not be achieved overnight, but would like to accept Ms. LaBranche's offer to get her input, and would like to open up the presentation to the community. The Commission concurred. Chair Wainwright stated that it would be an advantage that a non-Commission member take the lead on this project. Member Kukshel volunteered to work on the plan once his robotics coaching duties are over, but not lead it.

9) Trails and Grants Working Group – Member McVay

Member McVay confirmed that he is the only person working on this project. He found materials on a trail plan that has been proposed, but needs to be updated. He feels the entire framework is there.

Chair Wainwright asked if Member McVay has a scope of work.

- Member McVay stated that the first item on the agenda should be to survey/identify the trail areas and put them in priority.
- Member McVay is hoping that members of the Conservation Commission would be involved, and the rest of the group would be townspeople.
- Member Krause volunteered to help.
- Member Nenart offered to help with his chain saw.
- Member McVay stated that he would like to have crushed stone trails to prevent runoff and to make them handicap accessible.
- The Working Group would also mark the trails.
- Member McVay stated that a paper survey and an online survey would be needed of the existing trails – to assess the condition.
- Chair Wainwright asked if the blazing can be included under this project.
- There would also be a need to apply for grant funding, as needed.
- Member Kimball offered to help with tractor work.

Member McVay stated that the use of the trails should be defined, such as allowing cross country skiing, bike riding, horses, etc. Member Nenart stated that if the mode is not motorized, there should not be a problem of people using the trails.

Chair Wainwright would like to coordinate this work with the Scouts that will be available. Member McVay will look into that. Chair Wainwright stated that using the scouts for this purpose would be important. Member Kukshel feels that there are a large number of groups that would be willing to help, they just need direction.

The Scope of Work that the Board came up with is:

- Grant Applications
- Assess Conditions
- All Blazing Activities
- Review Rules and Regulations
- Create Schedule and Contact Work Parties
- GPS (or other) trail maps

Member Kukshel asked if Hampstead still had their trails committee.

10)GPS Trail Maps – No update

11)Short Reports and Other Business:

a. “Office Hours”

Chair Wainwright stated that his first “office hours” the third Saturday in February seemed successful. Chair Wainwright stated that a resident, Dave Cacciotti, would like to make the land of the proposed athletic field Conservation Land. Chair Wainwright feels that the land is already fairly protected because of the wetlands, and if the town would ever want to do anything with the land Chair Wainwright would be very insistent that the Commission hold the town to the same very high standards that they would hold any other developer to. There should be a plan, it would be reviewed by the State (who have jurisdiction over the wetlands), and there would need to be storm water management plan.

Chair Wainwright stated that he will continue to hold “office hours” for the next two months. Chair Wainwright invited other Members to join him.

b. Chadwick Town Forest

Chair Wainwright will schedule a walk with Charlie Moreno.

c. Presentation about Invasive Plants

Greg Jordan, UNH Cooperative Extension will present a program on invasive plants to the Atkinson Garden Club, April 3, 6:30 PM at the Atkinson Community Center.

d. Historical Society

Noyes Rock shelter walk postponed. Tentatively set for the first Sunday in April.

e. Other Business

“Keep Atkinson green, **vote NO on 15.**”

Next Meetings

The next two regular Conservation Commission meetings will be Mondays April 1 and May 6, 2019.

Member McVay would like to bring up a motion for the April 1st meeting: The Atkinson Gilmanton Grant still has not paid the town the royalties due on the trees, he would like to revisit that. Chair Wainwright stated he will add that to the agenda.

Also, the NH Association of Conservation Commissions annual conference will be the first Saturday of November, November 2, 2019, and Chair Wainwright encouraged everyone to hold the date for this important educational opportunity.

12) Adjournment

Chair Wainwright requested a motion to adjourn.

Member McVay made a motion to adjourn the March 4, 2019 meeting of the Atkinson Conservation Commission. Member Krause seconded the motion. All members of the Conservation Commission present voted in favor. Vote: 7/0/0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:59PM.

Attachments:

- Treasurer’s Report
- Page Farm 7-unit addition plan from the February PB meeting

Town of Atkinson Conservation Commission 2019 Budget Tracking

Account Number	Description	TM Approved 2019 Budget	What	Amount	Date Prepared	Date Submitted	Amount Submitted	YTD Total	YTD Unspent
40.46111.110.00	RECORDING CLERK	\$ 998.00	Minutes, Jan 7, 2019	\$82.50	1/14/2019		\$82.50	\$ 82.50	\$ 915.50
40.45111.220.00	FICA	\$ 1.00						\$ -	\$ 1.00
40.45111.225.00	Medicare	\$ 1.00						\$ -	\$ 1.00
40.46111.390.00	OTHER PROF SERVICES	\$ 2,500.00	Minutes, Feb 4, 2019	\$156.00	2/21/2019	2/22/2019	\$156.00	\$ 156.00	\$ 2,344.00
40.46111.550.00	PRINTING AND BINDING	\$ 1.00						\$ -	\$ 1.00
40.46111.560.00	DUES/SUBS/MEMBERSHIPS	\$ 400.00						\$ -	\$ 400.00
40.46111.620.00	OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$ 1.00						\$ -	\$ 1.00
40.46111.625.00	POSTAGE	\$ 1.00						\$ -	\$ 1.00
40.46111.650.00	CARE OF GROUNDS	\$ 3,000.00	Replacement float for Town Dock, -2% Ebner reimbursement: Junction Markers	\$126.89 \$103.68	1/24/2019 1/2/2019	1/25/2019 1/7/2019	\$ 124.35 \$103.68	\$ 228.03	\$ 2,771.97
40.46111.740.00	NEW EQUIPMENT	\$ 300.00						\$ -	\$ 300.00
40.46111.820.00	MILEAGE	\$ 74.00						\$ -	\$ 74.00
40.46111.840.00	SPECIAL PROGRAMS	\$ 1,000.00						\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
40.46111.850.00	EDUCATION & CONFERENCES	\$ 250.00						\$ -	\$ 250.00
40.46111.875.00	SIGNS	\$ 500.00	Conservation Easement Boundary Markers	\$304.77	1/28/2019	1/29/2019	\$304.77	\$ 304.77	\$ 195.23
TOTALS		\$ 9,027.00						\$ 771.30	\$ 8,255.70

