

Atkinson Conservation Commission Minutes
Wednesday, May 27, 2020, 7:00 PM
Via Zoom (no physical venue)

Approved June 24, 2020

Members Present:

Paul Wainwright, Chair
Bill Steele, Vice Chair
Pete McVay, Secretary
Dennis Krause
Scott Kukshtel
Denise Legault
Jeff Nenart
Andrew Borisko (Alternate)
John Fournier (Alternate)
Suzie Newman (Alternate)

Others Present:

1. Call to Order, Emergency Declaration, Attendance, and Introduction of New Members

Chair Wainwright called the meeting to order via Zoom conference call at 7:00PM on Wednesday May 27th, 2020. Chair Wainwright began the meeting by reading the state-of-emergency declaration that can be found in Attachment A.

Chair Wainwright also stated that all votes will be taken by roll call, and these results can be found in Attachment B.

Chair Wainwright took attendance by roll-call and introduced the new members of the Commission – Suzie Newman (alternate, one-year term), Andrew Borisko (alternate, two-year term), and John Fournier (alternate, 3-year term).

2. Election of Officers

Chair Wainwright will run again for the Chair position, Bill Steele has agreed to run for the Vice Chair position, Pete McVay has agreed to continue on in his position of Secretary.

Member Nenart made a motion to elect Paul Wainwright as Chair, Bill Steele as Vice Chair and Pete McVay as Secretary. Member Legault seconded the motion. Vote: 7/0/0. (The details of this roll-call vote can be found in Attachment B).

3. **Review and approval of minutes (4): March 2 & May 10, 2020, public and non-public**

Chair Wainwright requested a motion to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2020 Public session of the Atkinson Conservation Commission, as written.

Member McVay made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2020 public session of the Atkinson Conservation Commission. Member Legault seconded the motion. Member Kukshel abstained. Vote: 6/0/1. (The details of this roll-call vote can be found in Attachment B).

Chair Wainwright requested a motion to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2020 Non-public session of the Atkinson Conservation Commission, as written.

Member Nenart made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2020 Non-public session of the Atkinson Conservation Commission. Member McVay seconded the motion. Member Kukshel abstained. Vote: 6/0/1. (The details of this roll-call vote can be found in Attachment B).

Chair Wainwright requested a motion to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2020 Public session of the Atkinson Conservation Commission, as written. Member Nenart made note of two spelling corrections to be made.

Member Legault made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2020 Public session of the Atkinson Conservation Commission as amended. Member Krause seconded the motion. Members McVay & Kukshel abstained, and Chair Wainwright assigned Alternate Newman to vote since she was in attendance on May 10. Vote: 6/0/2. (The details of this roll-call vote can be found in Attachment B).

Chair Wainwright requested a motion to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2020 Non-public meeting of the Atkinson Conservation Commission, as written.

Member Nenart made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2020 Non-public session of the Atkinson Conservation Commission. Member Steele seconded the motion. Members McVay & Kukshel abstained, and Chair Wainwright assigned Alternate Newman to vote since she was in attendance on May 10. Vote: 6/0/2. (The details of this roll-call vote can be found in Attachment B).

4. **Treasurer's report: land acquisition expenses, more maps?**

Chair Wainwright stated that he did not furnish a Treasurer's report because the Commission hasn't spent any funds in the last two months. Chair Wainwright continued that the Commission received a refund for the tree seedling giveaway that was cancelled due to the pandemic. Member Steele stated that the Barry

Conservation camp was also cancelled due to the pandemic so the funds allocated towards that expense will not be spent.

Chair Wainwright asked what expenses would be coming from the trail maps project. Member Krause stated that there were some updates that needed to be made to the master map files which incurred some additional costs as well as some costs associated with his intention to install signposts with mailboxes at the entrance to three or four of the busier trails in Town. Member Krause stated that he would wait until after the pandemic has been resolved in order to install the mailboxes.

5. Trails: Review of recent activities, and next steps – Dennis

Member Krause stated that all of the trails are currently in good shape and he is very happy to see the trails being used as much as they are. Member Krause stated that the maps he has put out for hiker consumption are going quickly and a re-print will be needed sometime in the near future.

Chair Wainwright stated that the bittersweet vine cleanup near Merrill Drive was completed earlier this spring and the area is in good shape. Chair Wainwright stated that the washout on the Sawyer Land was also remedied and is also in good shape. The Commission discussed some confusion while following the trails along the Atkinson/Hampstead/Plaistow borders, in regard to unknowingly crossing over into other towns' trails, and several members suggested various options for clearing up this confusion which will be explored further in the future.

6. Sawyer invasive plant management: awaiting proposal

Chair Wainwright stated that the Commission sent out an RFP for preliminary proposals last fall to five different vendors, and only heard back from two – Steve Taylor and the Rockingham County Conservation District. Chair Wainwright has reached back out with an updated budget of \$4500 to see what work could be done for that amount of money. Steve Taylor stated that he would not be able to complete this work during the current pandemic. The Rockingham County Conservation District responded via email stating that they would also not be able to help at this time due to their workload of invasive mitigation that is lined up for the fall. (A copy of this email can be found in Attachment C.)

Member Borisko stated that he has a friend with an excavation machine that could be useful towards this effort. Member Borisko stated that although the associated costs would be around \$1,500 per day (for machine & operator), he believes an acre to an acre and a half could be cleared with each day of work. Member Borisko stated that he'd get in touch with his friend to schedule a site walk with himself & Chair Wainwright.

7. Land Conservation Plan

Chair Wainwright stated that this effort has been off to a slow start due to the challenges associated with the pandemic. Members Newman & Kukuštel offered feedback on the progress made thus far. The Commission discussed a question raised by Member Newman – “Who is the audience of this plan?” The Commission concluded that this plan is intended for use by the Commission, other Town officials and the residents alike – for a multitude of reasons, the most important being to facilitate applying for grant funding.

8. Pollinator Pathways – Suzie

Member Newman stated that she attended an event called “Pollinator Pathways,” which is a grassroots organization that started in Kingston, New Hampshire. Member Newman continued that there are currently about ten other communities involved in this organization whose goal is to educate residents on pollinating species (e.g. what plants the pollinators need, what can residents do to bring back pollinators, etc.). Member Newman stated that she reached out to the Garden Club and hopes to work together with them to bring a greater awareness to the residents in regard to increasing the population of the various pollinating species. Member Newman stated that she will put together an initial plan to potentially get the Commission involved in this project.

9. GIS & GRANITview training proposal – Pete

Member McVay stated he now has free access to GIS which is the background system for almost any geographical maps used today. Member McVay stated that his access to this program allows him to go into the program and to begin making any queries the Commission may have. Member McVay plans on holding a virtual meeting to explain the various functionality of GIS for the Commission.

10. Brief Reports & Other Business

a. Herbicide presentation postponed to 2021; scripted PowerPoint presentation planned

Chair Wainwright stated that this presentation by Dan Wixted has been postponed until next spring, but Dan plans on making a scripted PowerPoint presentation on the same subject. Chair Wainwright plans on rescheduling this presentation to the spring of 2021.

b. Variance for 1 Murray Drive was granted

Chair Wainwright stated that this variance for the garage at the Travers residence was approved by the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

c. ZBA variance hearing for 4 Industrial Way was postponed to June 10

Chair Wainwright stated that this variance hearing was rescheduled to the Zoning Board of Adjustment's June 10th meeting. Chair Wainwright stated that the proposed conservation easement has now been completed to the satisfaction of the Commission. Chair Wainwright reminded the members that we voted in our February 3 meeting to recommend approval of the wetland setback variance contingent on filing the conservation easement deed, and that we voted on our May 10 meeting to accept the gift of the easement, contingent upon approval by the Selectmen.

d. Any Scout business? – Bill

Member Steele stated that the Scouts have cancelled all of their summer trips and are currently trying to come up with creative ways of meeting virtually, getting outdoors, and completing their community services as normal. Chair Wainwright asked if any Eagle Scout projects were coming up, Member Steele stated that there are not, but they are holding a Court of Honor soon and he will gauge interest at that event. Member Steele asked the Commission for ideas for Eagle Scout projects since the pandemic has made things so challenging.

Member Krause mentioned that the Marshall Land annotated nature walk was originally completed in the 1990's, and suggested that restoring this nature walk could be a potential Eagle Scout project. Member Steele agreed that restoring this nature walk could be a good project and continued that the Scouts could potentially create their own nature walks on other Town lands as well. Member Newman suggested utilizing the Scouts as part of the invasive plant mitigation around Town would be a good idea. Member Steele stated that this was being planned prior to the pandemic, but the problem they are currently up against is that any minors using sharp tools need adult supervision, and, of course, the pandemic has limited the number of people who can congregate in an area at one time. Member Steele stated, finally, that this could potentially still be done in small groups but they'll need to be more creative to find safe ways to do it.

e. "Office Hours" on hold until further notice; 3rd Saturday trail walks this summer?

Chair Wainwright stated that the 3rd Saturday "office hours" are on hold until further notice, and also stated that he assumes that organized trail walks won't be possible this summer either because of limitations on the size of gatherings. He asked the Commission for other creative ideas to do instead. Member Legault stated that they've held kayaking events in the past which would be easy to hold while maintaining social distancing requirements. Chair Wainwright stated that he wouldn't be planning any events but encouraged Member Legault to feel free to plan a kayaking event on her own.

f. Bench repairs on the Woodlock trails – Jeff

Chair Wainwright requested an update on this project. Member Nenart stated that he and his daughter Catie have completed three benches so far and (according to Catie) they are “the most comfortable wooden benches you’ll ever sit on”.

g. Next month: review non-public minutes for possible release

Chair Wainwright stated that next month is the annual review of non-public minutes for possible release. Chair Wainwright stated that any non-public minutes that are at least two-years old likely do not contain information that is of use to anyone, and, as a result, he’ll be recommending the release of most of the non-public minutes. Chair Wainwright stated that he’ll put this item on the agenda for the next Commission meeting.

h. Other business

No other business was brought up by the Commission members.

11. Next meetings: June 24 and July 22, 2020 at 7:00PM

Chair Wainwright stated that the June 24 meeting will definitely be via Zoom, and that it is likely, for at least the near future, that there will be at least an option for members and guests to attend via Zoom as well.

12. Save the date: NH ACC Annual Conference: Saturday, November 7, 2020

Chair Wainwright expressed concern that this year’s NH ACC annual conference may be impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions, but asked members to hold the date for now anyway.

13. Non-public session under NH RSA 91-A:3, II (d), consideration of the acquisition of land

Chair Wainwright addressed the television audience and said that the Commission was about to go into non-public session to discuss acquiring a piece of land, as allowed by RSA 91-A. He explained that this is being done because it would not be in the Town’s best interest to discuss our intention to purchase land in public, and also that this particular landowner had asked that it not be discussed in public either.

Chair Wainwright went on to inform the television audience that the Commission would come back into public session following the land discussion, and that the only business yet to be conducted would be to vote to seal the non-public minutes and then adjourn for the evening.

Chair Wainwright requested a motion to go into non-public session of the Atkinson Conservation Commission under RSA 91-A:3, II (d) for the consideration of the acquisition of land.

Member Legault made a motion to go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II (d) for the consideration of the acquisition of land. Member McVay seconded the motion. Vote: 7/0/0 (The details of this roll-call vote can be found in Attachment B.)

Minutes of the non-public session are contained in a separate file.

Member McVay made a motion to close the non-public session of the Atkinson Conservation Commission. Member Legault seconded the motion. Vote: 7/0/0. (The details of this roll-call vote can be found in Attachment B.)

Member Legault made a motion to seal the minutes from this non-public session. Member McVay seconded the motion. Vote: 7/0/0. (The details of this roll-call vote can be found in Attachment B.)

14. Adjournment

Chair Wainwright requested a motion to adjourn.

Member Krause made a motion to adjourn the May 27th, 2020 meeting of the Atkinson Conservation Commission. Member McVay seconded the motion. Vote: 7/0/0. (The details of this roll-call vote can be found in Attachment B.)

The meeting adjourned at 8:50PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Zachary Gilberti, Recording Clerk

Attachments:

- a. Emergency Declaration**
- b. Roll-call Vote Details**
- c. Email from Rockingham County Conservation District**

Attachment A

A Checklist To Ensure Meetings Are Compliant With The Right-to-Know Law During The State Of Emergency

As Chair of the [Atkinson Conservation Commission](#), I find that, due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

We are utilizing [Zoom](#) for this electronic meeting. All members of the [Commission](#) have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone # [929-205-6099](#) with meeting ID [917 9775 5929](#) and password [418024](#) , or by clicking on the following website address: <https://zoom.us/j/91797755929?pwd=MIlnkbnhhdko4aUxQdHEvRFdHOU1pdz09>

b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the [Town of Atkinson](#) at: www.atkinson-nh.gov

c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access:

If anybody has a problem, please call [362-4549](#) or email at: stationmgr@atkinson-nh.gov .

d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that **all votes** that are taken during this meeting shall be done by **roll call vote**.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

From: Tracy Degnan
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 1:06 PM
To: 'Paul Wainwright' ; 'Arianna Spear - RCCD'
Cc: conservation@atkinson-nh.gov
Subject: RE: Invasive Plant Mitigation on Sawyer

Hello Paul

Thank you for reaching out. RCCD completed a site walk along the eastern transition area of Sawyer Town Forest for review. Originally, RCCD was contemplating providing an estimate for spraying only on the western transition area due to the better access.

RCCD currently has a lot of invasive control work now lined up for the fall, which is also when we would propose any treatment at this site. So, after review and looking at our schedule we've decided not to offer an invasive control proposal quite yet.

Access to treat the eastern transition zone is impaired by the high density invasive (red zone) you must first traverse to then enter the transitional zone. It is because of this and the condition of the red zone that we believe it may be more feasible and likely less costly to look at ways of opening up the red zone. This practice would then allow for better access to the transition zone. This type of practice could be completed with mechanical equipment such as an excavator with mower head, and that is how we have opened up access and areas for better control results at Odiorne Point State Park.

In addition, any invasive control work completed within 25' of Foote Brooke and the surrounding wetlands will require a Special Permit. That being said - between the time it takes for a Special Permit to be approved, lack of appropriate access to much of the invasive acres, RCCD doesn't think it's feasible for this growing season. Plus, the density of species such as Japanese barberry, especially along the brook corridor that cannot easily be treated using cut-stump techniques adds to the complexity.

Our suggestion would be to spend your allocated funds on improving access in this eastern area, and then RCCD would be happy to re-review again next spring.

RCCD'S time is getting short now as field season is underway, so any further review would have to wait until at least late fall. Please keep us posted on your management options. Thank you for your consideration and we appreciate the opportunity.

Tracy