

Atkinson Conservation Commission Minutes
Tuesday, August 31, 2021, 4:00 PM
6 Upland Road, Atkinson

Approved September 22, 2021

Members Present:

Paul Wainwright, Chair
Jeff Nenart
John Fournier
Denise Legault, Alternate

Others Present:

Charles George
Greg Jordan, Rockingham County Forester

1. Call to Order, and Attendance:

Chair Wainwright called the meeting to order at around 4:05 PM, declared that the meeting had been properly noticed, and declared that a quorum was present. Chair Wainwright introduced County Forester Greg Jordan, who is a licensed forester and an expert in Best Management Practices for Town Forests.

2. Purpose of the Meeting

Chair Wainwright reviewed the purpose for the meeting, which was to walk the portion of the McPherson Town Forest abutting the land of Mr. Charles George, 6 Upland Road, and to determine what forest maintenance activities might be best for the land. The land is known as Map 4 Lot 46 on the Atkinson tax maps.

3. Discussion

Members of the Commission, along with Forester Greg Jordan, proceeded to the back of Mr. George's land where Mr. George was already waiting. Upon arrival there, Chair Wainwright suggested that the meeting proceed with a walk of the land to provide an opportunity for Mr. Jordan to comment on the health of the forest and make suggestions for ways to best manage the land.

Mr. George declined the opportunity to walk the town's land, so the meeting proceeded on Mr. George's side of the property line, which was in full view of the northern portion of the McPherson land.

Since Mr. George had made an offer to "clean up" the land at his expense, Chair Wainwright suggested that Mr. George describe his proposal. Mr. George stated that he felt the land was an eyesore, that the land had no value to the Town as conservation land, and that he proposed to remove dead trees and limbs, remove downed trees, and remove the mat of decaying leaves.

Chair Wainwright then asked Mr. Jordan for his views of what would be the best practices for managing the forest. Mr. Jordan's overall assessment, from what he could see from where we stood, was that the forest was a healthy, mature forest. He described the value of downed trees in terms of their use as wildlife habitat and food, and their ability to replenish the soil with nutrients. The same is true of the leaf cover on the ground, which has the added benefit of providing erosion control (the forest considerably slopes away from Mr. George's land). He provided advice that the land was not a liability to the Town, and refuted Mr. George's concerns about the land being a fire hazard.

This discussion continued for about 10 minutes, with Mr. George repeatedly interrupting Mr. Jordan and emphatically disagreeing with Mr. Jordan's expert opinions.

In summary, Mr. Jordan's recommendation was that the best management practice for this part of our Town Forest was to leave it as it is, with the possible exception of removing any invasive plants that are found on the property. None were visible from the vantage point of the meeting.

Mr. George then angrily denounced Mr. Jordan and the Conservation Commission for disagreeing with his assertion that the land needed to be cleaned up.

4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned around 4:30 when Mr. George demanded that we leave his property, and stated that if we remained on his land we would be trespassing.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul Wainwright, Chair