

BOLTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
April 6, 2020, 7:00 p.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING utilizing ZOOM

Members Present: Chairman Rod Parlee, Alan Bicknell, Brenda Cataldo, Jean Laughman, Matthew Rivers (Alternate), Peter Van Dine and one member of the public-Mike Spellman

1.0 Preliminaries

1.1 Call Meeting to Order

Chairman R. Parlee called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

1.2 Minutes Approval of March 2, 2020 Regular Meeting

P. Van Dine moved to accept the minutes as submitted. J. Laughman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2.0 Public Comment: None

3.0 Correspondence:

BCC Save the Date information
Document of Community Forest Plan requirements
Email from Susan Massino-Community Forest Response
BCC Proposed Budget for FY 2021
Earth Day "Nature Blitz" Schedule

4.0 Financial Report:

P. Van Dine emailed a copy of the report to all members. The report was explained and several entries were discussed. The Bolton Finance office has confirmed all current balances.

4.1 Composter Sales: An additional composter was sold last weekend.

4.2 Onset Order: P. Van Dine will check on the status of this order.

4.3 RBV Supply-Purchases

R. Parlee picked up three sizes of waders and three sets of gloves that had been delivered to Town Hall.

4.4 Calendar Sales & Collection

A few calendars are left to be sold at England Hardware, Town Hall and the library.

4.5 Fairy House Building Contest Prizes: Prizes are pending as the contest has been postponed.

4.6 NCCD Seedling Sale

The seedling sale is still on. April 24, 2020, is the pickup date. P. Van Dine offered use of his truck. J. Laughman will pick up seedlings and compost and has offered to do the planting in pots she has donated.

4.7 CLCC Conference

Webinars will be offered in lieu of the in person conference. April 10, 2020, is the deadline to request a refund. P. Van Dine moved to request a full refund of \$260.00 (\$230.00 to the Professional Business and Training Account and \$30.00 to the Conservation Activity Fund). A. Bicknell seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The Bolton finance office and Joshua Kelly should be notified that a refund has been requested to ensure proper account crediting. Discussion ensued about possibly increasing next year's donation from \$25.00 to an amount to be determined.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 BCC Volunteer Monitoring Initiative-V-STeM Equipment Shortage/RBV Data Collection

P. Van Dine noted that 2 loggers are in place. 2 more tidbits will be put into the streams at locations to be determined.

5.2 Photo Contest PR & "Save the Date" with 300 Year Anniversary Events

The photo contest is still on with a deadline of May 10, 2020. R. Parlee suggested posting past submissions to the Everything Bolton Facebook page to promote the contest. R. Parlee will contact the art teacher at Bolton High to solicit submissions from students. B. Cataldo and R. Parlee will contact submitters of last year's calendar pictures to ask for permission to use the photos on the State tourism website.

The Earth Day Event and some 300th anniversary events have been postponed due to COVID-19.

5.3 Library Exhibit for March-Material P/U Status

The library is closed. The exhibit will remain on display in April. R. Parlee will post pictures of the exhibit on the Everything Bolton Facebook page.

5.4 Cancellation of March 13, Community Resource Fair

A lot of effort was expended to prepare for this event and it was unfortunate that it was cancelled. R. Parlee expressed his thanks to A. Bicknell and J. Laughman for their volunteer efforts.

5.5 Results of March 25, Sustainable CT Meeting – Actions 2.1 & 2.2

P. Van Dine noted that FBL watershed management has been a topic of discussion. He will participate in the next meeting.

5.6 Bobcat Woods Management Recommendations

Gwen Marrion and Dick Treat joined the meeting for this discussion. The Land Trust opened up this 68 acre parcel in January 2020. R. Parlee and P. Van Dine have walked this parcel. The parcel was purchased with the help of a matching grant from the US Forestry Service. Ms. Marrion stated they are working with Joan Nichols, a forester and Lisa Wahle, a wildlife biologist. They have walked the property a number of times and are discussing how to improve wildlife habitat. There will not be any cutting for forest stand management. This has been a problem in the past.

A wildlife habitat cut (patch cut) is proposed for 6 acres of the parcel leaving only mast trees (i.e. oak, hickory and beech), snag trees and cavity trees. Some of the tree tops and debris (one brush pile per acre) will be left in place. This would discourage deer foraging. In a forest in Ledyard there were fewer deer after a similar cut.

Ms. Marrion shared a map of the property where the habitat cut is planned, an area of 6 acres in the northern section of the parcel. No wetlands are in the 6 acres although the cut would abut a stream. Aspens would repopulate quickly and songbirds, reptiles and small mammals would be expected to populate the area as well. It is expected to be conducive to woodcock nesting. Bobcat, fox and other predators would be attracted to the area after songbirds and small mammals and reptiles populate it.

Mr. Treat noted that several forests were researched before considering this plan. Most of the trail that R. Parlee and P. Van Dine walked will remain the same. Funding for the proposed cut has been requested from EQIP program from NRCS. A cutter has not been identified yet. Deadline for obtaining funding is April 18, 2020. R. Parlee noted that climate change and erosion are factors that should be taken into consideration. J. Laughman noted that if some space isn't cleared under the mast trees or if the trees aren't trimmed, there will be no undergrowth due to lack of sunlight.

A. Bicknell asked if there was an inventory taken of wildlife in the area. Gwen noted that there was an inventory taken of the trees in the parcel but not the wildlife. Gwen will share the tree inventory with the Commission. R. Parlee questioned forest management for the benefit of game species. He will share the Forever Wild conservation easement with Ms. Marrion. R. Parlee expressed his appreciation to Ms. Marrion and Mr. Treat for sharing this information with the Commission. Dick Treat noted that good guidance will be used. Community forest is the goal.

P. Van Dine noted that 6 acres is 10% of the total parcel. He is concerned about the impact to wetlands as the cut would be abutting a stream. A. Bicknell is hesitant about the cut because the cut that was done on Box Mountain sounded like the rules would be followed but they were not. P. Van Dine agreed that the Box Mountain experience was a case of someone breaking the rules.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Cancellation of March 21, Vernal Pools Day and report of BNSP VP

The public walk was cancelled due to COVID-19. Jean Laughman walked solo to the Vernal Pool. She shared pictures of salamander egg masses at the far end of the vernal pool. Alan read that there is a symbiotic relationship between a specific algae and the egg masses. A. Bicknell and R. Parlee plan to get together to take a video about vernal pools to post on Facebook.

R. Parlee encouraged B. Bicknell, J. Laughman and M. Rivers to monitor the trails more frequently now that usage of the trails is increasing. A. Bicknell noted that the last time he walked the trails there was a significant amount of animal waste, two white pine trees were uprooted and there was lots of garbage.

6.2 Postponement of April 25, Earth Day-50 "Nature Blitz"

This event has been postponed. A future date will be suggested at the next meeting. The Town Administrator requested that the Commission take that lead on this for the town. Presenters will be contacted. An Earth Day flag will be flown at Town Hall during the week of Earth Day.

6.3 Photo Contest Request for Photos and PR: Discussed above in 5.2.

6.4 May 25, Family Day

There is uncertainty about whether or not this will be held. Prizes for the photo contest are usually distributed on this day. Another distribution day such as Trails Day may have to be selected.

6.5 June 7, Trails Day

Reservations will be required and there is still uncertainty about whether or not this event will be held. Two speakers are scheduled. Bike Walk Bolton is planning their event for Saturday, June 6th.

6.6 FBL and BLWCA Report, EPA 319 Grant Application

P. Van Dine reported that FBL is holding a Zoom meeting tomorrow night. The March meeting was cancelled. There is no report on the 319 Grant as the deadline has passed for this year.

The drawdown is complete and the lakes are back up to normal summer height. The beavers have been a problem at Hatch Hill Road. B. Cataldo's husband has seen several dead and struggling fish recently in Lower Bolton Lake. A. Bicknell noted that two mature and two juvenile bald eagles have been spotted at the lake. P. Van Dine noted that if the property owner can be identified, Kim Welch could put out a notice through Town channels about not setting off fireworks that would disturb the nest.

7.0 Approval of Clerk's Invoice

P. Van Dine moved to accept the clerk's invoice as submitted. A. Bicknell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

8.0 Adjournment

Peter moved to adjourn at 9:16 p.m. Brenda seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 4, 2020, 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by Leslie Brand,

Leslie J. Brand

Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for the approval of these minutes and any corrections hereto.

