

BOLTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Monday, February 7, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting utilizing Zoom

Members Present: Chairman Rod Parlee, Alan Bicknell, Brenda Cataldo, Jean Laughman Peter Van Dine (joined the meeting at 7:06 p.m.) and Alternate Matt Rivers filling in for P. Van Dine until his arrival

Others Present: Special Guest, Jonathan Gourley, Director of the Bolton Land Trust

1.0 Call Meeting to Order

Chairman R. Parlee called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2.0 Minutes Review of January 3, 2022 Regular Meeting

J. Laughman made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. A. Bicknell seconded. The motion passed unanimously 5:0:0.

3.0 Public Comment: None

4.0 Financial Report

4.1 Calendar Revenue Received including Donations

P. Van Dine noted that since the last BCC meeting, he has deposited \$440.00 from calendar sales, \$35.00 from donations and \$200.00 from calendar ads.

\$22.40 for library display supplies will be reimbursed to J. Laughman. P. Van Dine made a motion that as Treasurer he would move \$15.29 from the Professional and Education account to the Office Supplies account to cover a shortage. R. Parlee seconded. The motion passed unanimously 5:0:0.

4.2 Custom Safety Vests for Field Work-Sizes/Cost

The purchase of the vests and stenciling of the BCC logo has been approved. The desired vests are currently low on stock. P. Van Dine suggested waiting until the original stock is replenished as the vests are not needed immediately. R. Parlee shared information on other vests that he saw on Amazon. B. Cataldo noted that because those are mesh, the logo will not be able to be attached.

4.3 Reprint Brochure “Importance of Dead Wood”

R. Parlee noted that the supply of these brochures has been depleted. B. Cataldo estimated that printing 150 copies would be \$80.00. She has made some revisions to the original brochure and will continue to work on this with R. Parlee. A. Bicknell made a motion to appropriate up to \$100.00 from the Conservation Activity Fund for the printing of “Importance of Dead Wood” brochures. B. Cataldo seconded. The motion passed unanimously 5:0:0.

4.4 Composter Supply

R. Parlee noted that two composters are still available for sale and he is interested in obtaining additional composters to resell.

R. Parlee asked J. Laughman if the North Central Conservation District could place an order for composters. J. Laughman noted that the brochure is already being compiled so it would not be possible for this year and she doesn't feel that the sale of composters is a viable activity.

P. Van Dine proposed that next November or December would be a good time to get orders to make a purchase by the following February. R. Parlee feels that better marketing will be the key to selling them.

5.0 Continuing Business

5.1 2022 Calendar Sales, Distribution, etc.-Brenda

B. Cataldo noted that there are still calendars for sale in various locations.

5.2 Groundwater Resources-Laboratory Analysis Account Update-Peter

P. Van Dine was invited to a Selectman's Finance committee meeting regarding the budget. Pam Sawyer and Jim Rupert were present. The BCC budget is virtually the same as last year although additional funds were requested for laboratory water testing. The budget should be approved as requested.

5.3 BCC Winter Trails Day Hike Results at Heritage Farm

R. Parlee shared a collage of pictures from the hike. Two members from Heritage Farm Commission attended along with thirteen members of the public.

6.0 New Business

6.1 BLT's Bobcat Woods: Timber Harvest and Farm Management

R. Parlee shared a map of the Bobcat Woods. The BCC supported the acquisition of this parcel.

Jonathan Gourley, Director of the Bolton Land Trust was present. M. Rivers attended the Bolton Land Trust walk in November and heard plans for the area and wanted to get information about what practices are being put in place to reduce environmental impact while allowing public access.

Mr. Gourley provided the following information. The BLT acquired this land through a USDA grant. A forest management plan was put in place. A forester, Joan Nichols was hired to come up with a plan for management of the parcel. There is upland forest in parcel 4 where a forest succession cut could be done. Biodiversity may be reduced without this practice. NRCS (National Resources Conservation Service) is involved to put together a plan to create a succession forest that would be beneficial in attracting woodcocks. Their habitat has been

reduced in Connecticut. They require a scrubby forest area. J. Laughman has done woodcock surveys for many years and she noted that they can be temperamental.

The dirt access road off of School Street needed to be improved to handle heavy equipment. The road material is recycled material—old granite counter top. There was also geo-textile material put down with gravel. The water will flow through the road as opposed to flooding the road. Humps were included to reduce erosion. A gate will be installed at the opening to the road. Logs would be placed in this area for removal. A skid road will also need to be put down with a temporary timber mat to protect the area. The trees to be retained have been marked—primarily birches, smaller beeches and aspen. Oaks will be kept as seed trees and they require quite a bit of light to grow properly. This will promote a healthier forest in the future. Any ruts will follow the existing trail and they will be seeded and graded. NRCS's goal is to promote the growth of healthy forests.

R. Parlee noted that keeping up with best practices will be critical. Ray Hardy is concerned about wildlife being impacted from activity in the area, primarily bobcats. J. Laughman asked if Mr. Gourley has seen bobcat in the forest. He noted that neighbors near the parcel have reported sightings.

R. Parlee mentioned the concern of a clearcut creating edge habitat with invasives. The area will have to be monitored them. Mr. Gourley noted that the experts feel that the cut will be a short-term event and the forest that will be created will be a healthier one. The BLT has discussed invasives and it is a major concern. They will be monitored to make sure they don't take over. The cut is fairly isolated so it will be less likely that invasives will take over although truck tires may bring in seeds.

The logger is from Sterling and they have worked with conservation cuts in the past. They don't get paid until all ruts and other damage is fixed. The temporary mats that will be put in will protect the stream. Gwen Marrion, formerly of the Inland Wetlands Commission will be involved. R. Parlee asked if standing dead trees will remain. Mr. Gourley didn't know if many dead trees are in the area that is proposed for cutting. M. Rivers was asking about the farm pond. Mr. Gourley noted that it would be difficult to keep the pond clear on a regular basis. A meadow may be created in the future but maintenance is difficult to keep up with.

R. Parlee asked about a minimum of Board Linear Feet payment to the logger and how it is determined. Mr. Gourley was uncertain as to how it is calculated.

R. Parlee thanked Mr. Gourley for his time and excellent information.

After Mr. Gourley left the meeting, B. Cataldo questioned if trees would be inspected for signs of bird and animal life cavities before cutting.

6.2 Outreach: February Recycling Exhibit and Program at Library on 2/26 at 6:30 p.m.

R. Parlee thanked A. Bicknell and J. Laughman for their work on this exhibit.

On Monday, February 28, 2022, at 6:30 p.m., Sherill Baldwin of the CTDEEP will be presenting a Zoom program on recycling as part of a library program.

Increased recycling leads to lower trash tonnage which leads to lower costs to the Town. On the CTDEEP website there is a tab called “Beyond the Bin” that highlights recycling information. <https://www.recyclect.com/beyond-the-bin.html>

There was discussion on the difficulty of determining what items are recyclable. J. Laughman noted that the lack of consistent standards throughout the State makes it a difficult process.

6.3 Vernal Pools Day Hike Planning

The hike is planned for Saturday, March 26, 2022. Ed Pawlak will be invited. M. Rivers has compiled a detailed list of past hike participants. They can be contacted to see if they are interested in joining this hike. A. Bicknell suggested posting information at the tunnel to garner interest. R. Parlee will also post information at Freja Park.

6.4 FBL, BLWCA, SRWP and CACIWC Reports- Peter, Rod, Matt

P. Van Dine reported that the FBL is getting the Bolton Lakes Management plan in place with the CT DEEP. There has been a significant amount of public comment. A 319 proposal should be ready for January 2023. Some of the metal work has been installed at the new dam on Hatch Hill Road.

The BLWCA meeting will be held on Wednesday. The Bolton Lakes Management plan will be discussed. A field visit may be made to the Atlantic White Cedar stand. The ice would have to be at least six inches deep to handle a group of 10-12 people. Karl Hasel of the Northern CT Land Trust is interested in looking into acquiring property north and west of the Hatch Hill Road dam.

M. Rivers will be contacting Pat Young from the SRWP to select meeting dates. R. Parlee will be contacting Ms. Young to invite her to a BCC meeting for discussion of water monitoring goals.

CACIWC met at the end of January. Habitat Newsletter was a major discussion and training for wetlands commissioners was also discussed. They also discussed Hank Gruner’s new book. See <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/News-Releases/News-Releases---2021/New-DEEP-Published-Book-on-Amphibians-and-Reptiles-Makes-a-Great-Holiday-Gift>

7.0 Correspondence

Bio-Control of Adelgid in Freja Park—The adelgid doesn’t survive in subzero cold weather. A beetle release was planned for May but may be reduced due to recent cold weather.

Carole Cheah of the CAES has offered to survey the infected hemlocks at Freja Park. The BCC Chair will notify members of the date ahead of time.

Final 2020-21 FY Annual Report-R. Parlee thanked the BCC members for their excellent attendance record.

Clerk's Guidelines Document, etc. - R. Parlee went over the highlights of the document.

8.0 Approval of Clerk's Invoice

J. Laughman made a motion to accept the clerk's invoice as presented. B. Cataldo seconded. The motion passed unanimously 5:0:0.

9.0 Adjournment

B. Cataldo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m. A. Bicknell seconded. The motion passed unanimously 5:0:0.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 7, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Leslie Brand,

Leslie J. Brand

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

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