

Wentworth Conservation Commission (WCC)

Minutes of Regular Monthly Meeting

June 7, 2022

Place: Wentworth Town Office

Time: 10:00 AM

Present: Linda Brownson, Chair
Tuula Pihlajavesi, Vice Chair
Ilse “Izzy” Mercier, Secretary
Birgitte “Deda” Wilms, Member
Arnold Scheller, Select Board Ex-Officio

Chair Linda Brownson called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

Agenda Items:

1. Opening: Discussion on the status of the Town Forester and process to have one appointed, as well as the relationship between the WCC (Wentworth Conservation Commission) and the Town Forester.
The WCC sets the vision and the Town Forester acts as the agent whose skill set will assist in advising the WCC to best obtain that vision.
A. Scheller stated the importance of having a WCC member present at Select Board meetings for transparency and keeping the Board up to date on the progress and activities of the WCC. L Brownson will attend and in her absence delegate that to another WCC member.
2. Minutes of June 7, 2022 approved by A. Scheller and seconded by T. Pihlajavesi.
3. Town Forest
1989 Forest Management Plan by Northam Parr reviewed.
Page 3 “Recommendations: The Wentworth Town Forest should be actively managed under the multi-use concept, to increase the flow of benefits and utility to the community. Particular emphasis should be placed on developing recreational resource potential, enhancing forest wildlife habitat, maintaining an attractive and visible public forest in the community and providing a sustainable return of periodic revenue through

sound timber production.” It was agreed that those recommendations are in alignment with the current WCC vision.

May 11, 2022 L. Brownson sent an email to members containing “Trails for People and Wildlife, A Guide to Planning Trails that Allow People to Enjoy Nature and Wildlife to Thrive”. Very informative article in terms of trail impacts to wildlife, the corridor of influence, locating trails with wildlife in mind, planning habitat edges to encourage biodiversity and tools to assist with trail planning.

It initiated discussion on the importance of riparian buffers, clearing for views at the height of the land, kiosks identifying mountain peaks, water bars to prevent erosion, the importance of leaving slash for providing habitats, transition at edge of woods and trail placement that won't interfere with future logging. The WCC would choose the type of logging to be done. For example, the 16 acre Town Forest at the corner of Buffalo and Turner could benefit from a Timber Stand Improvement course. It could be a model on how to manage forests for land owners. Programs that can be accessed: NHTOA Women in Woodlands and Women with Chainsaws, Project Learning Tree Program, school curriculums, story book walks, etc. Chief Trott should be notified of trail system. Also, a conversation with Jeff Ames regarding size of the new rescue buggy so trails could accommodate it.

A. Scheller has offered to provide a walk through of his property for better understanding of the different types of forestry practices and how they can enhance wildlife habitat. A date will be selected and posted in the near future.

Key ecological features to consider for trail system.

Members agreed more time is needed in the Town Forest. A natural asset inventory is needed. L Brownson will check with June Garneau, the Town Plan Advisor, as to whether this information has already been collected. Camp Pemi may possibly have done a hydrology study in 2017 of the Wentworth area.

Volunteer sources.

Possibilities include Pike School, local schools, summer camps, Boy Scouts, Prisons, Earth Team and Churches. A good trail plan needs to be developed before soliciting volunteers.

Trail Head Access Point

There was a brief site visit to the landing at close of meeting. L Brownson will bring Paul Manson, Road Agent, into the conversation for entrance needs, gravel, culverts and permits. Welcome kiosk needs maps, trail systems with Carry In/Carry Out emphasized.

4. Friends of the WCC, fund raising plans, summer Farmer's Market
A 501C3 will be needed to accept donations. L Brownson will look into the process of obtaining one for the WCC or the possibility of joining with another Wentworth organization.
Farmer's Market booth is \$10/week. This would be used as an opportunity to engage with the community, provide information about the vision/mission of the WCC and obtain a preliminary list of interested people and skills they could provide. An interactive display would assist in keeping children engaged. B. Wilms suggested a contest to choose a mascot/ambassador and name.
NH Division of Parks has a National Trails Program. An application has been obtained with the possibility to submit for 2023 once a definite trail plan is in place.
5. Protecting the Town Forest; easement options
A letter expressing interest has been sent to Pemi Baker Land Trust. It felt this land trust was the best option as it supports the area and surrounding towns. A copy of the Deerfield Town Forests Protection Project was given to members as it identifies benefits of securing a conservation easement.
6. Town Website: WCC, Town Officials & Events Calendar
WCC shows up in all three places. B. Wilms will post on the Facebook Wentworth Bulletin page WCC information as another way to educate and communicate with the community.
7. Observations in Nature
Bears continue to make bold appearances in the areas.
A family of woodcocks have taken up residence in a local slash pile.
8. Other business
Members verified that horseback riding would be acceptable on trails.
No wheeled vehicles would be permitted.
It was emphasized that signage should be positive and include an explanation as to the why of a particular activity not being permitted. Ex: erosion, disturbance to wildlife, etc.
9. Comments or questions from meeting visitors – none

Meeting adjourned at 11:50. Site visit followed

Minutes submitted by I Mercier, Secretary.

