Franconia Conservation Commission meeting

4/28/2016 at 4 pm.

Members present: Kim Cowles, Chris Nicodemus, Mary Grote, John LaChapelle , Ginny Jeffryes, Eric Pospesil.

Guests: Rebecca Brown, of Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust, joined at 5:40 p.m.

ACT Atty William Oliver via phone conference call at approx 6 pm.

Chris’s update on Municipal Technical Assistance grant:

It was approved. Chris wrote it, North Country Council’s Tara Bamford is the major professional involved, Franconia Planning Board is the grant recipient. Upcoming will be a meeting led by UNH Cooperative Extension about next steps. Grant gives the town a professional to review the zoning ordinance and possibly help revise it, and to have a community workshop for community input. The first cycle for this new grant. It is to help to explore various issues such as a walkable downtown, a Village center, preserving sensitive areas. Tara will need map of the sensitive areas.

Kim’s update on Fox Hill Park trails:

A recreational trails grant is available every other year: current proposals due by June 4. Proposal would be for developing Gale River trail (using “Peepers Trail”) to 5 feet wide using ledgepack base to make wheelchair accessible: would also enable stroller use, easier seniors’ access. Provides variable amounts of money depending on cost of project (Range 8,000 to 80,000). Towns have to match 20%, can be cash or in-kind services such as volunteer hours.

Is early in process: haven’t yet investigated building costs. It’s Federal money distributed to the State for trails. Next step is a meeting that Eric and Sandy Olney will attend May 4th about process of applying. Will presumably partner w/Adaptive Sports - needs to go through their Board of Directors first. After that meeting, will know more about developing to-do list.

Future issues to be worked on: # of available volunteer hours, mapping/measuring the trail in linear feet, determining wet areas that might need a low boardwalk or culverts. Kim notes that the wet areas need to be repaired, regardless of whether we get the grant or not. Kim cut some trees at the parking lot perimeter recently, about 3 feet in. For W/C accessibility, parking lot gravel needs to be fixed.

Lots of work to be done to pull this together for this grant cycle.

Other eventual related tasks: Informing DES since the Gale is a 4th order river, also wetlands impacts; Coordinating with contractors for bids. Discussion ensued about possible organizations/groups/individuals who may help with donations/equipment/labor etc.

Update on Lawrence property purchase – closing likely to be in about 2 wks. Reviewed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that Rebecca Brown of ACT supplied for our consideration. Reviewed, and discussion consensus is it looks ok.

We want to buy title insurance. Atty Oliver doing the title search. Eric preliminarily walked the Lawrence piece and also the Town Forest recently, has questions about boundaries/surveys. (Addressed at end of meeting w/ Atty Oliver.)

Motion made to to sign the Memorandum of Understanding of 4/28/2016 with ACT, seconded, members present voted unanimously in favor.

Eric recently checked out the right of way access to the Town Forest – there is a pin on the road near the river, and a big cherry tree across the river. One stone wall peters out along the boundary of Lafayette Brook. Lots of uplands on the W side of Meadow Brook. He recommends that town should consider a survey of Town Forest in the future.

Discussion about land use of Lawrence property: differences of opinion expressed about whether the land along the two rivers should be walking/riding trails, or left wild. Further discussion will occur in future meetings as easement conditions and management plan are developed.

? the naming of the trail made last year which connects Tucker Trail with Meadow Brook trail, which goes through the Lawrence property: ask Cindy B and Tucker for ideas.

Brief discussion for procedure for cutting any future trails on Lawrence property – group agree this needs to go through the Franconia Conservation Commission for ok.

Rebecca Brown arrived 5:40 pm:

In response to various questions about current Lawrence property status, she phoned Atty Bill Oliver via conference call.

He explains deed/survey/property history researched to date. Surveyor Tom Smith working on this for him. Has no concerns based on the recent research to date. He intends to do a warranty deed. He thinks a reasonable risk here to close before final survey completed but that’s FCC’s call. Discussion of possible closing date of Monday May 9. Select Board meeting needed for this.

Next FCC meeting planned for last Thursday in May. Adjourned.

*Minutes submitted by Ginny Jeffryes*