Franconia Conservation Commission (FCC) \*\* DRAFT MINUTES \*\*

Meeting: June 15, 2021, 4 pm, Dow Field pavilion

Members present: Chris Nicodemus (Chair), Mary Grote, Ginny Jeffryes, Jill Brewer, Red McCarthy

Draft minutes of meeting 4-28-21 reviewed. Red moves to approve the minutes. Chris seconds. Unanimously in favor.

Mascoma Bank FCC checking account:

Per 5/25/2021 email to FCC members from Kim Cowles, Town Administrator:

“A while back I mentioned a savings account in the name of Franconia Conservation, at Mascoma bank.  I did a little research, this account was established by Lib Welsh and Ashton Crosby for plantings around town.  They were instrumental with the shrubs and island plantings.  Since then the White Mountain Garden Club has made donations to keep the town gardens colorful.  This account has been inactive since 2014 and the bank is charging a monthly fee.

I think it would be best to close this account this summer and use the money to purchase some trees for the library front lawn or plantings around the welcome center.

Can you put this on your agenda for the next meeting and let me know what you all think is best for this account. Kim Cowles [contact info].”

Discussion: The above-mentioned FCC members – Lib Welch and Ashton Crosby -- were on the Conservation Commission a couple decades ago. Red says per his recollection (Kathy McCarthy was also on the FCC then, and they knew Lib Welch), the money in that account was gathered from donations from local Garden Clubs and other organizations for the FCC to use for flowers and plantings to use around town. He says that when Lib Welch was on the FCC, the main activity of the FCC was maintaining and adding flowers around town. That activity – for example the flower boxes on the bridges – has been since taken over by the Garden Club and local volunteers. Red says he thinks the donations were in order to not need to appropriate annual town money for this. We don’t have the current balance here today, but Ginny’s recollection from a mention of this account a few years ago when Kim was on FCC was in the $400 range. Red suggests using the money to buy easement placards. Mary suggests not using the money for a Welcome Center plantings because it doesn’t exist yet. Ginny thinks that if used for plants or trees that they should be native (pre-colonial) to our northern New England ecosystem, because of the coevolution of native plants with native insects - particularly caterpillars, most of which are specialists on specific native foliage. Insect larvae require specific native host plants to eat in order to reproduce. Insects and birds are in decline, and birds require them – especially caterpillars – for feeding their young. Focusing on planting native vegetation is something we can do, and she thinks educating people about this is important. General discussion about perhaps involving Lafayette School in a native planting project as a good educational committee activity. There are inexpensive native shrubs and trees that can be ordered from the NH State Extension service in January, distributed in May. Jill mentions knowing a current second grade teacher who might be interested in this. Jill moves that we withdraw the money from FCC account at Mascoma Bank and move that money to a bank where there won’t be a monthly fee under the name of the FCC to be used for a native New England planting project. Mary seconds. Unanimously passed. (Note: Red needed to leave meeting just prior to the formal resolution – so did not vote).

Chris: update on Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust (ACT) steering committee for Cooley-Jericho Forest. More community usage there and on other local conservation properties. There’s funding available to work on parking problems, not specific to our town. ACT notices a lot of area cutting by WMNF and private landowners around Cooley-Jericho, so cutting isn’t needed on the property right now.

Chris: Trail system integrity update re the 65 acre parcel that abuts the Lawrence Family Forest, and has hosted the Pebble Beach Trail. T&T bought it from Andy Hyde, and Schmidts recently bought from T&T. The Pebble Beach trail area is where they want to build their house. So they will be putting in a new Pebble Beach trail on their property next to the Lawrence Family Forest boundary.

Casella update: Ginny reports that NH HB177 – that we supported – passed the House but was killed in the NH Senate yesterday. Thus, the Casella landfill application adjacent to Forest Lake State Park will continue to move ahead.

Next meeting: TBA 3rd or 4th week of September at the Dow Pavilion.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.

Minutes by Ginny Jeffryes