Franconia Conservation Commission (FCC)

Meeting: August 16, 2022, 4 pm, Dow Pavilion

Members present: Chris Nicodemus (Chair), Ginny Jeffryes, Mark Ober, Mary Grote, Art Daily, Dan Zajic (alternate)

Chris: Dan is a voting member today in Jill’s absence.

Draft minutes of 5-24-2022 meeting reviewed. Discussion with two minor amendments. Art moves to accept minutes as amended; Mark seconds. Unanimous vote in favor.

Chris and Ginny met with Officer John Doyle, State Forestry Enforcement of the Division Forest and Lands, on July 7 at Chris’s house about the illegal cutting on the Delaney property town-held conservation easement, as well as for education about the rules. Officer Doyle explained his role related to logging enforcement and monitoring logging sites. He commented that lack of intent in a situation makes it difficult to enforce re any fining.

McKenzie Woods Middle Earth corridor border marking and cutting issues on conserved land – deferred this agenda item until Jill is present.

Fini property lot 17.3.0 and Town Forest: Closing w owner on 4.2 acres abutting Rte 18 occurred beginning of June. FCC discussion occurred about putting a conservation easement on the Town Forest and abutting Fini lot. Ginny says that her understanding from RSAs and past is that we can put a conservation easement on that 4.2 acre parcel without a town meeting vote, since it was purchased for the town using the Conservation Fund plus the donor augmentation. No town vote was required for the ACT easement on Lawrence Fam Forest. But she thinks the Town Forest was gifted or perhaps taken maybe in the 1930s, per recollection of what was said 10 or 15 years ago by previous FCC member who reported some history. Ginny hasn’t been able to find deed online at Grafton Co deeds to verify. Saw a NHGIS map a couple yrs ago as already in Conservation, but a couple maps don’t. Needs historical research. She thinks possible town would need town meeting vote on adding an easement if not, if correct. Discussion ensues that protecting both parcels because a watershed and wildlife property, and abutting conserved Lawrence Fam Forest is important. ACT would be logical easement holder. Chris moves that we explore obtaining a conservation easement on the Town Forest and the Fini lot. Dan seconds. Unanimous vote in favor.

Fox Hill Park conservation easement monitoring Visit: Chris reports that he walked the boundary late June with SPNHF easement representative. They found some trash on the property near SW border at either the boundary from Lot 14-46 or at the town Cemetery line lot 14-48. Ginny inquires as to whether there was any boundary breach northwest corner, which previous FCC chair had mentioned persistent a few years ago. Chris says didn’t see it. Next year will do SPNHF walk again. Dan will check out the trash near the Cemetery boundary to see if a utility trailer will be needed to remove. Ginny will help Dan remove the trash.

Native plants in town-owned ornamental landscapes – Ginny’s item, and she requests deferral to next meeting.

Other: Ginny mentions dense stand of invasive Phragmites reed she’s noticed increasing in size over 10+ years on lot 17.3.0, Fini lot we just bought. The only location in town she’s seen Phragmites australis. Close enough to the wetlands that she thinks safest approach to removal is digging it up. FCC general discussion of various locations of various invasive plants in town – knotweed, Oriental bittersweet, others - and their harms to ecosystem. Agreement that Ginny will gradually work on digging the Phragmites up, and Dan is available to help. Plan to replace with elderberry and/or other native plants.

Next meeting: TBD

Minutes by Ginny Jeffryes