**Canterbury Conservation Commission**Meeting Minutes – September 14, 2020

CCC Minutes - 2020-09-14 - Draft - v1 .docx

Members Present at Sam Lake House Conference Room: Steve Seron

Members Present by Phone or Zoom: Kelly Short (moderator), Ken Stern (acting chair), Bob Fife, Teresa Wyman, Chris Blair

Members Absent: Bob Steenson, Linda Fife

Guests: Ashley Ruprecht, Sara Riordan

Kelly opened the meeting at about 7 pm.

# Meeting Minutes

Ken moved the August minutes, Kelly seconded. Changes proposed by Ken and Kelly were accepted. All approved.

# Items in need of action or discussion

## Rocky Pond

Ken wrote a letter of support for a group requesting a grant from the NH DES to help fund the Rocky Pond culvert replacement project. The letter does not commit the Town to any financial obligation. Kelly motioned to approve and send the letter: Steve seconded. All approved.

## Easement Monitoring Contract with Chris Kane

Kelly reviewed the terms of our current contract with Chris Kane and noted that now is the time to set up a contract for the period 2021 to 2023. Ken received a draft contract from Chris K, which Kelly said looks good. Chris K’s prices have gone up only a little. Kelly suggested that Item 2 in the current contract (which is referenced in the new contract) be expressly added to the new contract. All agreed this makes sense. Kelly will ask Chris K to add Item 2 from his current contract his new (proposed) contract as an addendum. Ken noted that at the bottom of page 2 in the new contract the phrase “four-year total” should be changed to “three-year total.” Ken will make this edit and check the math in the new contract. Kelly will take the new contract, as updated by Ken, to the Select Board for approval.

## Glines Easement Project

Kelly summarized this easement project for the guests and discussed the advantages of partnering with local land trusts or other conservation agencies on easement projects. In this case, for example, the CCC covered some of the costs of implementing the Glines Easement Project but allowed the Five Rivers Conservation Trust to negotiate the easement and be the easement holder. Such arrangements allow the CCC to leverage its limited funds and free it from ongoing easement monitoring costs and responsibilities. The Glines project is expected to close by the end of September. The CCC voted in November 2018 to contribute funds to cover project expenses and legal fees. Fiver Rivers has requested a payment of $12,000 to cover their expenses so far.

To clarify the intentions of the CCC, Kelly made the following motion: The Conservation Commission will support the Glines Farm conservation easement project with up to $19,000 to cover legal, title, and survey expenses, as well as a $10,000 stewardship fund contribution, all to be invoiced by Five Rivers. Funds will be drawn from the Land Use Change Tax fund to cover these costs.

Ken seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

## Meeh Wetlands Permit Request

Ken received a request from Greg Meeh for a **permit by notice** to create a short stone/gravel path to a pond on his property that would allow him to drive a tractor to the pond. Approved unanimously.

# Updates of ongoing activities

## Sawyer’s Ferry Timber Harvest

Ken said that Ron Klemarczyk discovered significant discrepancies between the boundary description in the deed and what he found during his inspection of the site. Ron is working to resolve the discrepancies and still expects to complete the project this year.

## RSFCA Field Causeway Project

Ken said that the RSFCA field causeway improvement project has been completed by Padula Excavating. Ken noted that Padula was selected to do the causeway project after it was confirmed that the Town Highway Department was not available. Ken complemented the project design done by Charlie Krautman and said the new causeway looks good.

## How to Celebrate the Glines Easement Project

Ken suggested that the CCC put a notice into the Canterbury Newsletter thanking Five Rivers and the Glines family. Kelly agreed to do this and expected the notice will be in the November edition.

## Riverland Signs

Ken discussed the ongoing Riverland sign issue. He noted that several signs posted by the Town at Riverland contained inconsistent dates and text that was mostly “negative.” Ken would prefer text that was more welcoming and gives a history of the Riverland recreation area, in addition to providing rules and dates. Ken hopes that a member of the CCC will agree to champion this project. Kelly said the CCC needs to determine what it wants in terms of signs and an information kiosk and then make a proposal to the Select Board. Kelly suggested that the cost of the “welcome” sign should be added to the CCC 2021 budget and that the three existing signs be replaced with two signs. Ken thinks the Riverland area should open on May 15th. Teresa asked why the area could not open on May 1st. Ken said the opening date needs to occur after the end of “mud season.” All members agreed to discuss this issue further at future meetings.

## Charlie Krautman Trail Projects

Kelly said that over the next two months Charlie is planning to do more cleanup work on three trails: Skoodac Loop, Spender Meadow, and Big Tree. Kelly will ask Charlie to publish his work schedule so that members can help.

# Discussion of 2021 Budget

Kelly displayed a draft 2021 CCC budget and discussed major items. Kelly suggested adding funds for an administrative assistant and will talk with town office staff and the Planning Board to get an estimate of the amount needed. A CCC “admin” could take meeting minutes, work on files, and create an index of CCC votes. Kelly updated the Easement Monitoring budget item to equal the actual amount contained in Chris K’s contract proposal. She noted that the CCC has completed an overall property management plan for the RSFCA and a forest management plan for the Sawyer’s Ferry property. She further noted that the CCC had completed an NRI for the Misery Road property but has not scheduled any other projects for this area. Kelly asked other members what new property management they think need to be done.

Bob F. asked about the treatment of the elm tree in the Center. Kelly thinks this responsibility had been moved to the Cemetery Committee but will confirm this with Ken Folsom. Bob F. asked Chris Aiken (the contractor currently mowing the RSFCA field) if he had time to mow the Kimball Pond dam.

Ken brought up the Riverland boardwalk removal project and suggested that it be put out to contract.

Steve asked which year the Rocky Pond treatment expense item in the 2021 budget applied to. Kelly was not sure but noted that the CCC contributes $1,000 for this work every 12 months. Kelly further confirmed that the Rocky Pond treatments have kept Milfoil from spreading further.

Kelly will send a copy of the Rocky Pond treatment report to Ashley.

# New Business

Kelly said that the CCC Annual report must be completed by early January so that it can be included in the 2021 Town Report.

Kelly provided an update on the Town Master Plan project. The Planning Board has completed a town-wide survey and hired the Central NH Regional Planning Commission to help draft the plan. She said the CCC will be expected to contribute to the new plan, as it has for past plans. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the current master plan project is on hold.

Kelly discussed the RSFCA field management plan. Currently, one half of the field and the field’s permitter are mowed each year. But it has been a few years since the CCC has trimmed trees along Kimball Pond road. In addition, the commission may need to remove some trees in the field, to maintain the field as an early succession habitat. Kelly suggested that a workday be scheduled to perform these tasks.

Bob F. said that Chris A. thinks that mowing the field every other year is getting difficult. Bob F. noted that he found purple loosestrife in the field.

Ken said that this is a good year to drop any trees in the RSFCA field that need to be removed because the field is so dry.

Bob and Ken agreed to identify which trees need to be cut. Charlie K. and Tom Osmer have both offered to help with any chainsaw work that needs to be done.

Kelly will pick a date for the RSFCA field workday.

Bob F. discussed several rare plant species found on property bordering Randle Road and suggested that this area would be a good location for an NRI.

Ken suggested that this area should be considered for future conservation easement projects.

Kelly discussed mapping work done by the CCC including the creation of a co-occurance map that highlights land with high conservation value in Canterbury. Kelly agreed to send a copy of the co-occurance map to Ashley and Sara.

Kelly suggested that considering the current drought the commission should consider increasing the priority of water resources in future conservation maps.

Kelly noted that the current balance of the Land Use Change Tax Fund is $210K, which if leveraged could enable conservation of large parcels of land. She further suggested that the CCC needs to focus on identifying and securing land that should be conserved. This is a key goal of the CCC.

Ashley asked how the CCC approached landowners regarding possible conservation easements.

Kelly said that land conservation easement projects are often initiated through personal connections or by landowners who contact the CCC. In addition, the CCC has held information nights and talked with Five Rivers to learn their land conservation priorities. Regarding maps, Kelly noted that the Merrimack River Watershed Council has created a co-occurance map to highlight land with high conservation value in Canterbury and other towns in the Merrimack River water shed. Kelly noted that the CNHRPC is planning to add some of their data into our co-occurance map to make it even more useful in identifying land with high conservation value.

Sara asked if the CCC has bylaws. Ken said yes and that he would send a copy of the CCC bylaws to Sara and Ashley.

Ashley asked if the CCC is responsible for reviewing anything other than DES wetland permits, such as wetland adjacent plans.

Kelly said that the CCC had recently been asked to comment on a building permit request for a property on a Class 6 road. However, she further noted that the Select Board recently decided that the CCC no longer needed to be consulted about class 6 building permits.

Kelly said that the only formal CCC review function is wetland permit approval. In addition, the CCC is consulted by the Select Board when town-owned land is to be sold.

Steve asked about the condition of the Kimball Pond dam beaver deceiver. Bob thinks this structure does not need immediate attention.

Steve asked if anyone had found new candidates for commission membership. No member had any suggestions, but Ashley said she wanted to become a member.

Kelly moved that Ashley be added to the recommended membership list that will be sent to the Select Board. All members approved.

Ken agreed to forward the CCC recommended membership list to the Select Board.

Kelly closed the meeting at 8:50 PM.

# Action Items

Ken: Send letter of support for Rocky Pond culvert replacement project. Review math and make edits to the new Chris Kane contract. Send the CCC recommended membership list to the Select Board.

Kelly: Notice in November Newsletter with thanks to Five Rivers and Glines family. Ask Charlie to publish his trail work schedule. Send the Rocky Pond Treatment report to Ashley. Set date for the RSFCA field workday.

Bob and Ken: Identify the trees that need to be cut in the RSFCA field.