Canterbury Conservation Commission  
Meeting Minutes – April 8, 2019

Members Present: Tom Osmer (Chair), Ken Stern (Vice Chair), Chris Blair, Bob Fife, Linda Fife, Steve Seron, Kelly Short, Bob Steenson, Teresa Wyman.

Absent: Charlie Krautmann

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:05 PM.

**Item 1: Approval of March 11, 2019 meeting minutes.**

Two minor corrections were made. Bob Steenson indicated he is willing to stay on as an alternate member. The discussion of rock removal and retention of “islands” in the RSFCA were revised to general discussion rather than attributed to an individual. Upon motion by Kelly, second by Linda, the minutes were approved.

**Item 2: Updates on Permits, mail and other activities.**

* There were no permit applications received this month.
* Bob Fife reported that the Cushman elm in the Center was trimmed by Lucas Tree at no cost. Bob noticed them working in the area and asked them to do it. They were doing line trimming for Unitil.
* Five Rivers Conservation Trust, meet and greet. Tom spoke with Beth McGuinn of 5 Rivers about having a session where Canterbury landowners could learn more about conservation options. Beth indicated they are interested in doing this but not right now. Five Rivers’ current priority is having the new Land Protection Specialist work on developing a regional conservation plan. They will be seeking our input on the plan and may be open to a joint meeting in the future.
* There is a need to update our town wide map showing conservation lands and town owned parcels of conservation interest. This map was prepared at the request of a previous Board of Selectmen. Ken volunteered to do this. Ken will work on this. A new working map will be obtained from the CNHRPC.
* There is a need to post our minutes and other documents to the Town web site. Chris and Kelly volunteered to work on this. Chris and Kelly will continue working on this.

**Item 3: Wildfire Training Site.**

The Canterbury Fire Department asked if we knew of a potential site where they could train to fight wildfires. They had several criteria to consider. The Commission discussed possible conservation properties and will inquire if the abutters are open to learning more about the possibility of this activity. Kelly offered to draft a an email for abutters and Tom will contact them.

**Item 4: Kimball Pond Road and Morrill Road intersection.**

The residents of Morrill Road have been working on getting a domed mirror placed at this blind intersection. They placed balloons on a stake to indicate the proposed location. The location is within the road right of way along the Robert S. Fife Conservation Area on Kimball Pond Rd. Kelly moved and Ken seconded the following motion: The CCC approves the location for the 30” traffic safety mirror along Kimball Pond Road at the RSFCA. The motion carried unanimously.

**Item 5: Sawyers Ferry Conservation Area.**

In anticipation of an informational meeting to discuss the draft Management Plan, Tom obtained a list of abutters. There are 16 abutters to the property. The commission discussed preparing for this meeting. The following tasks were accepted.

* Tom will draft a notice for the town newsletter and email list. He will also draft a letter which will be sent to the abutters.
* Ken and Chris will develop presentation materials including a map and talking points.
* Kelly agreed to moderate the meeting, calling on members to answer questions as needed.
* The full commission will work on possible questions and answers at our next meeting.

**The Informational Meeting will be held at our regular meeting on June 10**

**Item 6: Snowshoe Hill Conservation Area (formerly known as Rocky Pond).**

The commission discussed re-naming this block of town-owned land. The name Rocky Pond was derived due to its proximity to the pond, though there is no frontage on the pond. The property has frontage on Snowshoe Hill Road which is a Town Class VI road. It was the consensus that a more appropriate name is the ***Snowshoe Hill Conservation Area*** which will be the new name***.***

Discussion then focused on the possibility of in-filling two parcels The commission approved approaching three abutters to see if they have any interest in conveying their property to the Town. Any terms for such conveyance would be determined after knowing more about their interest. Tom will confirm ownership of the tracts and send the letter. Ken will draft the letter with other CC members reviewing it (Kelly, Teresa, Bob S.)

**Item 7: CC Membership**

Kelly Moved and Ken seconded the following motion.

The Conservation Commission recommends to the Board of Selectmen the following slate for appointment:

Reappoint Ken Stern and Linda Fife as voting members. Reappoint Chris Blair, Teresa Wyman and Bob Steenson as alternates. All appointments are for three year terms expiring in 2022.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Item 7: Big Meadow – Wheeler Lot**

The commission received notice from the Board of Selectmen that they were considering selling a town-owned lot in the Big Meadow (Map 238 Lot 3). Tom requested that the Selectmen not take any action until the CC had the opportunity to review the proposed action.

The commission did some research into how the town acquired the property and its conservation values. Several years ago the CCC prepared a map of town-owned land indicating properties with conservation value in response to a request from the Board of Selectmen. This tract and an abutting tract were identified as conservation priority. The State of NH Wildlife Action Plan ranks this parcel and the Big Meadow as the highest priority habitat in the State.

Mark Stevens had been approached about 20 years ago about surveying the property by Ernestine Wheeler who was interesting in donating the property to the Town for conservation purposes. The CCC at the time had agreed to accept the donation. Ernestine could not produce a deed and didn’t want to spend the money on lawyers and surveyors since she was living on social security and donating the land. The CCC went to the Board of Selectmen for money to hire Mark to survey the property and prepare a quit claim deed. The Board of Selectmen said it would save money and achieve the same result if Ernestine just stopped paying taxes for a few years and the town would take the land. Ernestine was concerned that this approach might ruin her credit score. Mark produced copies of letters indicating Ernestine’s intent to donate the land to the Town.

The Commission discussed the conservation value of the Big Meadow, this parcel and nearby lots.

Ken moved and Steve seconded the following motion:

Tom Osmer, Chair of the CC, should write to the Selectmen that the CCC recommends the Town retain this property for conservation purposes based upon the high conservation value identified in both the State Wildlife Action Plan and the Town’s conservation priority map as well as the intent of the original land owner that the property was to be a gift to the town for conservation purposes.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Item 7: Other Business**

There was discussion and consensus that the Commission should ask the town assessor to place a memo in the property file for each town-owned property that is of conservation interest. This would help make it clear to anyone interested in a parcel or doing research that the CCC has identified the property as important for conservation purposes.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15

Respectfully submitted, Ken Stern

**Task list**

Ken will work on updating the conservation land map.

Chris and Kelly will continue working on getting minutes and documents on the Town web site.

Tom will contact abutters about a potential fire fighting training exercise on adjacent town property.

Tom, Ken, Chris and Kelly all have work to do in preparation for the Sawyer’s Ferry information meeting.

Tom and Ken have work to do relative to contacting abutters of the Snowshoe Hill Conservation Area.

Tom will write to the Board ofSelectmen relative to the Wheeler Lot in the Big Meadow

Tom will write to the Board of Selectmen relative to Commission appointees.