

Beacon Falls Conservation Commission
10 Maple Avenue
Beacon Falls, CT 06403



BEACON FALLS CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Special Meeting
November 18, 2020
MINUTES
(Subject to Revision)

1. Call to Order /Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call

Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M.

Members Present: Kristen Jabanoski (KJ), Andrew Keane (AK), Lori Paradis Brant (LPB), Ellie McAdam (EM)

Members Absent: Ruth Burritt (RB), Lou Santora (LS), Ivana Potje (IP)

Others Present: None

2. Read and Approve Minutes from Previous Meetings

Motion made to approve the minute from the October 13, 2020 meeting with the following revision, *item 10. All donations/contributions noted were used from personal funds from Commission Members not municipal funding.* **KJ/AK, all ayes**

3. Announcements

KJ – brief announcement that we were listed as a co-sponsor for the Library Scarecrow Contest. There was a total of 6 entries, and they are on display at Town Hall. We shared on our social media about the event as well. They are working on outdoor activities still even though it is getting colder. Clerk noted that Library is doing curbside and that Town Hall is staggering staff and some staff is working remote. We are still taking appointments for residents by trying to limit how many people are in Town Hall due to the rise in COVID-19 cases.

4. Comments from the Public

None

AK – our Conservation Facebook page activity has been increased over the last few weeks and we have increased our followers. EM – There have been complaints about a subdivision and if it does go through aren't, we supposed to get a portion of that property? KJ – is this the Oakwood Drive? EM – yes. KJ – I did see that it is open for public comment right now for the P&Z meeting tomorrow. With the Ordinance, it is my understanding we are supposed to receive land for conservation or funds in lieu of. I think we need to raise that to the Selectmen. I think the public comment closes today. EM – it may not go through; a lot of people are upset about it. AK – should we draft a letter to P&Z and cc the Board of Selectmen notifying them of the Ordinance? KJ – yes, I think that should be a step we take. KJ – I can take the first step and draft some language for this Commission to review.

5. Review of Town Boards & Commissions Minutes

KJ – I have not had time to read through all of them, but I do have the October P&Z minutes and I am sure that has relevant info for this development. Has anyone else had a chance to read through minutes? LPB – does P&Z meeting tomorrow? AK – yes, at 7:30PM. KJ – I could probably attend the P&Z meeting. I have never been to one and it may be good to attend. AK – The Plan of Conservation is under the P&Z Commission and the Plan of Conservation drives a lot of their decisions so that is something that we should be aware of. KJ – that plan is due to be updated soon. AK – yes, 2023.

6. Correspondence

Correspondence received from CT Groundskeeper Association. Provided to the Commission members for review.

7. Old Business

- a. **Update on tree work at Lantern Ridge Park** – KJ – no update. AK – we need to determine who put up the barricade to the entrance and we need to set up a meeting with the Tree Warden, Rob Pruzinsky. Once we get his formal ok, we can draft a letter to the Board of Selectmen with his opinion and then we should be good to reopen. LPB – do you want me to reach out to the tree warden? KJ – that would be great. AK – KJ do you want to forward LPB the Park Rangers information too? KJ – yes and the Park Ranger would like a monthly status report from us on Lantern Ridge. He wants to include that in his report to the Board of Selectmen.
- b. **River Clean Up & Other Events** – KJ – we had a nice flyer made for the clean-up but it is getting a little cold to do these activities and for people to be excited and I think it would be best to hold off until Spring. LPB – I am fine with that, for me as a Commissioner I feel that it would be important to be ready and take charge etc. and I am not ready to do that right now. I think that it would be great if each of us could be in that position and to lead by example. KJ – we do have increased case numbers right now. AK – sounds good.
- c. **Diversity in conservation efforts going on and how to get involved** KJ – tabled until next month.
- d. **CTP Project** – KJ – tabled until next month.

8. New Business

2021 Meeting Schedule – Commission agreed on 2021 Meeting Schedule.

LPB – the Town recently acquired that little piece of land on the corner of 42 and Main. It was near the bank and used to be the banks property. I would like to investigate if that is Town property. Right now, there is just the sign for upcoming events there. I would like to explore the idea of turning that into something like a part of the National Pollinator Pathway or Wildflower Demonstration area with other partners in town. That area has opportunities there for educational conservation related topics. KJ – I think that is an excellent idea. There are a lot of possibilities there. I am happy to send an email to the Board of Selectmen. EM – Someone put that big border around it, so it must be the town. LPB – I can look at the property maps on the town website.

- 9. Land Conservation Criteria** – LPB – AK and I have not met this past month. AK – lets get together the beginning of December and put together a plan for 2021. LPB that is great, we can set something up for the first week or two.
- 10. Petition from Commissioners** – AK – the Hopp Brook development is receiving a lot of attention. In 2017 the P&Z Commission changed the Plan of Conservation to allow the property to be developed. The Conservation Commission acts as advisory to P&Z and this is a prime opportunity to raise awareness of what P&Z was considering and we should also write a letter to P&Z regarding comments from the Conservation Commission explaining the implications of what they wanted to

do. Moving forward as a Commission we should be looking out for these opportunities and raising awareness to these public meetings so they can be adequately represented by the public of Beacon Falls. LPB – I agree and there are steps that should be discussed before land is approved for development and the Plan of Conservation is important piece of that and we should in the future argue to keep it in its integral place. As land gets developed, we should have input and have it surveyed by certain scientists for the type of species etc. AK – that is a good idea. KJ – part of it is also making sure that P&Z and BOS are fully aware and keep us in the loop. In this case it would have been nice to comment in 2017. As new projects get proposed, being involved at the beginning would be beneficial.

11. **Payment of Bills** - None

12. **Executive Session (if needed)** - none

13. **Adjournment**

Motion made to adjourn meeting at 7:09 PM. **AK/KJ, all ayes**

Respectfully submitted,

Kerry McAndrew
Clerk, Conservation Commission