

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



BEACON FALLS CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Monthly Meeting
October 12, 2021
MINUTES
(Subject to Revision)

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

Chair RB called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M

Members Present: Kristen Jabanoski (KJ), Andrew Keane (AK), Ruth Burritt (RB), Ellie McAdam (EM), Julian Thomas (JT), Lori Paradis Brant (LPB)

Members Absent: None

Others Present: None

Welcome to our newest member Julian Thomas. Members provided a brief introduction of themselves.

2. Read and Approve Minutes from Previous Meetings

Motion to approve the meeting minutes from August 10, 2021, RB/AK, all ayes.

3. Announcements – None

4. Comments from the Public - None

5. Review of Town Boards & Commissions minutes – No action taken.

6. Correspondence – RB – received email from CACIWAC regarding registration for online conference in early November. RB will send this email to members. This is something that the town should pay for as we are required to do continuing education. Keep your receipt and we will process it for reimbursement.

RB – I did post on Facebook that we were looking for Commissioners.

7. Old Business

- a. Lantern Ridge Park Updates (Jabanoski/Keane)- KJ – the tree work was completed. The Girl Scouts did a great job and put together some information in the kiosks regarding the wildlife. One of them is artistic and drew some pictures as well and placed them in there. RB – I have seen in other towns paw prints with the animals in a specific area and that is a good idea for the future. KJ – The Girl Scouts are hoping to do some more trail maintenance and they did some the day they put information in the kiosk. They helped pull out weeds that were blocking the signage as well. I also had a resident reach out to me asking about the trail at Lantern Ridge. She felt it was overgrown when trying to follow it. The Park Ranger forwarded her email to me. She did go back and find the trail again. She does seem interested in possibly joining.
- b. Current Development Projects in Town (Jabanoski) – AK - I did attend session one of the Public Hearings for Hopp Brook. I did suggest they go through all the proper Land Use Commissions to weigh in on that proposed development. Specific to this Commission there is a set aside of open space acreage that needs to be maintained or transferred. That is a

key question that needs to be answered. EM – I read the article in the paper, and they can't seem to get an answer about unused land and waste septic issues. RB – that is an issue as far as the open space they are to donate. It can't be waste. LPB – this Commission should have to approve any use of Town open space. Swamp land should already be protected. AK – the neighboring parcel on the Bethany side is the water companies. I recommended that Planning & Zoning discuss the POCD and for them to consider any changes of the POCD to the Land Use Committees.

- c. Fire Conditions Sign – RB – I got an email from Cal about a week or so ago and he said it would be installed soon, but they are busy with the Carnival preparations. KJ – did you still want to do a ceremony for the unveiling? RB – yes, that is why I was trying to get a date from Cal on when it will be installed. It will be on the island in front of the Fire House. KJ – it would be great to get the Selectmen involved as well.
- d. Beacon Falls Conservation Page- no action taken

8. New Business –

- a. 2022 Meeting Schedule – **KJ made the motion to approve the schedule for the 2022 meeting schedule, seconded by RB, all ayes.**

9. Open Space Strategy and Planning – AK – provided a little background for our new member.

One thing that the Commission is looking into is adopting criteria for Conservation. I can send new members what we put together. Essentially it would be how we value certain parcels for open space. RB – are you thinking about a spreadsheet? AK – we do have a spreadsheet and part of our responsibility as a Commission is keeping an inventory of open space parcels. We created the open spaces and then we ranked them with Conservation or Recreational value. Then it has different criteria that we can assign a value based on the parcel. If there is a new development with a set aside, we can value it using this sheet. This will also work for parcels that we may purchase as well. JT – When you are coming up Skokorat, is that a dump? LBP – that is a Superfund Site. JT – do we know when it was capped? EM – I moved here in 1992 and it was already capped. AK - I think that it's important to get an open space strategy including strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations to Planning & Zoning. Other weaknesses that we have is that we have 1,500 acres to the Naugatuck State Forest but access from Beacon Falls is very limited. The only public access is on the Naugatuck side. The only other trail access points are from Bethany. There is also access at Coldspring Road, but that road is owned by the Railroad Company. The gate there was previous closed for years and just recently the gate was reopened. We could look at future opportunity to create a new trail into the State Forest. JT – it is a shame we do not have access to those areas at High Rock, those waterfalls are in the top of the State, and we do not showcase that enough. KJ – when it rains a lot, we try to go out to see them. RB – in July and August they do dry up. AK – we are looking to draft recommendations and it would be great to work on this further and get it out to the other Land Use Committees. KJ – we talked about having informal interviews with different town officials to get their thoughts on the plan.

- 10. Petition from Commissioners –** RB – my Commission is up in November, and I would like to be reappointed to the Board when my term expires, however I do not want to be Chair. AK - I supports the Board but does not have an interest in chairing right now. LBP – I am happy to rejoin unless someone else would be a better fit. I would still want to be a volunteer in some capacity. LPB – I have an idea to propose. I would like us to investigate the Dark Night Sky criteria. I am not sure if that is the right time, but it is about light pollution and the importance of safe night lighting. If you look at the maps of the world it shows you all the light pollution. Basically, it gives us criteria to have safety lights but not omit light back into the sky. JT – the first time I ever saw the stars was when I moved into my home here in Beacon Falls.

11. Payment of Bills – None

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

13. **Adjournment**

Motion made by AK to adjourn the meeting at 7:57PM, RB seconded by all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerry McAndrew
Clerk, Conservation Commission