

**TOWN OF BEACON FALLS  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
10 Maple Avenue  
Beacon Falls, CT 06403**



**TOWN OF BEACON FALLS  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
Monthly Meeting  
March 8th, 2022  
MINUTES**

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

Chairman Julian Thomas called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

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

**Others Present:** 0 Members of the public.

**Absent:** Lori Paradis Brant, Cody Muth

**2. Read & Approval Minutes from Previous Meetings**

Minutes from February 8th, 2022

**Motion made to approve the minutes as presented. EM/KJ.**

All aye.

- 3. Announcements-** JT: Have you seen Cody Muth's news in paper? KJ: So he can have his goats (article passed around regarding zoning amendment for livestock)

**4. Comments from the Public**

No comments.

**5. Review of Town Boards & Commissions minutes-**

No minutes reviewed.

**6. Correspondence**

**Clerk distributed email from Erin Schwarz, Finance Department:** regarding (1) Electronic Recycling Day with Take 2 Recycling (tentative date- April 30th, Conservation members may want to volunteer that day if needed) and (2) regarding \$5,000 available for Open Space Maintenance to clean up this year's Conservation Budget. In the past the money was used for Lantern Ridge cleanup and the town has a Purchase Order in place which encumbers these monies for Ed the Treeman to complete this work. It is advised that the vendor is contacted to schedule this work and Public Works be notified, with work completed before June 30th, 2022.

## **7. Old Business**

- a. Lantern Ridge Park Updates-** JT: went out for a pre-hike, in the process of putting together a team and talking to Kriz farms. If they don't come through we'll grab lumber. There is a marsh, wetlands, a deterrent for people who want to walk. 6x6 lumber, lay down flat boards over s bend and ramps down each side RB: Last time we used stone and it was not effective. JT: The wood will look good and age well, is nature friendly. We want to have done before the CT Trails Day KJ told me about. I went on their website to register and started to fill out info and need more people, need leaders, to get t-shirts. May be best to do an open hike. Groups of up to 20, will go out and walk them through the area or offer an open hike and let people wander and explore. RB: That's how we have done it in the past, had a table in the parking lot with water and information KJ: If we had at least half the group at the table giving information that would be good. EM: I can sit at the table RB: Also expressed interest in covering the table.
- b. Current Development Projects in Town**
- c. Fire Conditions Signage** JT: I tried James Gracey many times RB: Feb 22nd, he gave me his phone number, I asked him to join the meeting, but they have their budget meeting at the same time. I spoke with Brian DeGeorge and he had a volunteer to install the signs, and had a few ideas of where to place them. I asked Brian directly he said he picked out a couple of spots and said that Chris Tucker will volunteer to install the signs. He does the mailboxes. KJ: Do we still want to pursue a ceremony for installation? RB: Yes, we said we do want to have them, you and Cal and anyone from the commission. KJ: We should see if any of the selectmen would go. RB: Specifically Gerry, and now that the ground is not as frozen solid we're hoping to move it along JT: Ellie, did you ever get your reimbursement? EM: Yes, got one from the membership, will leave the personal one as a donation and will know what to do next year. RB: Do you know what the status is for our for CACIWIC membership? JT: The last meeting I got some info from Ellie and Kerry McAndrew contacted the board of finance and they were supposed to process it and give a refund. RB: Inland wetlands- we are supposed to split with them, EM: Then the town paid for all of it KJ: It's supposed to come half and half from us and inland wetlands. RB: Erin Schwarz will know if it was split.

KJ: Going back to Lantern Ridge. The girls scouts contacted Home Depot, wrote a letter and didn't hear back so they were writing letters to Kriz Farm AK: I'm happy to participate in the trails day as a leader. JT: Last time we also had a letter sent to Gerry about the land use committee and getting them moving and doing some correspondence. He got me in touch with Rich Minnick and they are trying to relight the fire if you will. RM is doing his thing and asked for us to give him a couple of weeks. I've gotten a bunch of paperwork from him, most are dated way back. RB: Kingsmark is one of them. EM: Are they meeting? JT: RM very responsive, and he got those maps for me. I went to his house and picked up those maps. I have those maps and others that I want to show you guys.

AK: One more item. We have to nominate someone to be on that land use committee. KJ: There was interest from multiple people including Cody. JT: You (AK) or Cody, you have a lot of history. RB: Cody may be able to do it and Andrew could do it as well because Cody is on another commission. JT: I think it can be two representatives. RB: I think it's one and I think if he's on P&Z then both Cody and Andrew can go if Cody is representing P&Z. JT: I've got an email from Rich and Gerry and I think it's two from each commission so if one can't go then there is a backup to send.

KJ: So if Cody was on the commission he would have to decide if he was representing Conservation or P&Z. JT: And Ellie would like to do it as well, right Ellie? RB I think the thing to do is ask Cody and see if he's going to be on land use for P&Z. KJ: So next meeting we can take a vote. RB: Or ask him between meetings. AK: I think we should lock it down in case they call a meeting in the interim, before we meet again. KJ: We can nominate an interim representative.

**Motion for AK and EM to serve as interim representatives for the land use committee. RB/KJ; all aye**

JT: There was an invitation earlier today from inland wetlands to go to their meeting tomorrow night if anyone else wants to go. It's last minute but I don't want to lose the chance to build that bridge. AK: I've been to a meeting in the past. It's good to show a presence and establish a relationship and I think that is what they are looking for as well. KJ: When is the meeting? RB: By the same token, we should invite them to our meetings as well and solidify that relationship. JT: 7:30 tomorrow in the assembly room. KJ: I think I can do that. AK: If a group of us went it would show that we are serious about it. JT: Good idea.

#### **d. Town Webpage**

### **8. New Business**

None

### **9. Open Space Strategy and Planning**

JT: Another area in town when it comes to open space that Rich Minnick (RM) was talking to me about, on the other side of the bridge, make a left, industrial area, O&G had cleared a path with some dozers and created a fishing area.

AK: It is in a random spot. JT: It was supposed to be long, down and round the cove just under a mile. I got the text from RM while speaking with the selectman and he told me it was our jurisdiction and I thought it would be more inland wetlands area.

EM: Do we own it or O&G? JT: We own it. O&G has a property for data storage and we were supposed to keep it clean and use it. RB: Was that on the open space map? AK: No, it's not. RB: But it is declared an open space? EM: And this property is on Railroad Ave? AK: Yes, and there is a sign that says 'trail'. KJ: In summer it would be hard to get back there, but easier this time of year, and I've seen fly fishermen back there. JT: Yes. I'm also waiting for RM to go to town hall and get the information for Lantern Ridge and get contact info for the owners from New York who own the adjacent property. AK: That was proposed by whoever owned it in the early 2000s as an open space. That could be an easy target for open space acquisition or a land use agreement. KJ: And that is connected to Lantern Ridge? AK: Yes.

### **10. Petition from Commissioners**

RB: In the budget that is going to end in June, we talked about getting official signs, like one on Pent Road. We might want to get some signs made soon.

JT: AK and I spoke about that previously. First some for Lantern Ridge, facing Beacon Falls, and on trails, to indicate where to go and boundary lines and neighboring lines.

RB: I would like to see our money spent on signage of some sort. Use it or lose it.

JT: What sign for Pent Road? RB: There is open space on Pent Road across from the park. Even knowing that there is an opening, you can't see it, would never know it was there.

KJ: This one is a little controversial. This is where they wanted to put in the indoor gun range. RB: I can guarantee the fire department does not even know where the opening is. AK: The designated parcel is open space. KJ: It does see some use. AK: It connects Pent Rec to the reservoirs. RB: My husband is in the fire department and he says no one knows this spot. AK: He's (potential gun range) this parce <indicates on map>. KJ: If you hike the parcel you see back of the business. AK: He wanted to acquire the parcel. RB: Would we sell the parcel if he wanted or would the town? AK: Planning & Zoning would have to vote; it would be a political process. EM: Did he ask and someone said 'no'? AK: It was in the preliminary stages. RB: There are already two gun ranges in town. JT: One is at High Rock. Where is the second? RB: The beagle Club. KJ: You can hear it from Matthies Park. AK: I think before we put up any signs there we'd have to broader consensus amongst the land use committee- this is a very high value parcel, next to a town park, state forest, and connects pent rd to the reservoir, but it will be something we need to get consensus amongst the land use group on. RB: How do you feel about it? If you are the rep from the conservation committee, how do you feel about it JT: I think it should stay open space. I'm all for a gun range but as you said, this is too valuable. AK: It would be based on the consensus of the commission what opinions I would put forth. RB: As a resident of Pent Road, I will say there is a lot of wildlife in that area. KJ: I don't think it's on the table right now. JT: But if we start talking about this area it may put it back. Is it hikeable? AK: Yes, and it's bikeable. KJ: We've seen people mountain bike. JT: We should get over there and give a name. AK: This would be a topic for the land use committee. There is a lot of space on this map that hasn't been marked, back in some of these neighborhoods where people put their leaves, and don't know its open space. There are metal circular disks that we can use to mark it. I don't think anyone would have a problem with us using these to mark these spaces. Some of these spaces haven't been used in a while. JT: I got this map last minute from the council of governments but I have a more detailed map at home, not as big or as up to date. AK: When the town acquired this parcel there were plans to have a trail established there, some history there, and a great topic for the land use committee. KJ: I like the idea for now of putting up the open space discs.

RB: Another petition- in the past all kinds of paraphernalia, including the tent that we used for things like the duck race, tablecloth, sign, traditionally was passed along to the chairman. Do you have space where you want to store this stuff? KJ: It's a 10x10 tent. RB: It needs to be cleaned but we spent some good money on it, it's good to have. And I have all kinds of things you put on the fridge, all kinds of paper stuff. Do you want to keep it? JT: I think you should keep it. KJ: What if we revisit the conversation with the town about storage so that no one is responsible for housing it? RB: I also have the key for all the file cabinets at town hall. JT: I will take that. RB: They lost the key and I think I have one from a prior commissioner. I will make sure they work and give it to you. There are probably all kinds of maps. I don't know if all the older minutes are there.

JT: And this is another map I requested. We talked about bridging this to that <gestures to ridge portion of the map> AK: The proposed development in early 2000s proposed open space set aside for the development, to go on top of the ridge. EM: Who owns it now? JT: A company from NY. AK: This might not be accurate because the GIS parcel map is not 100% JT: RM said the same thing. That way in the past, two levels of people came up from NY to look at it. They own it, but own it to own it not develop. It's not zoned for residential on the peak. KJ: It would not make financial sense, with the blasting that would be needed. JT: And need the longest road you've ever seen.

AK: This ridge is an iconic ridge, the southeast boundary on Beacon Falls. AK Or see them have the mountain taken out. RB: It's a beautiful drive. JT: When family comes up, it feels like entering another state. From the end of Seymour to Naugatuck you do not feel like you are in CT. Why did they buy it just to sit on it? You would think they would sell it, or donate it like Matthies Park. AK: It's worth a call to the owners to see what their thoughts are and what agreement could be worked out to connect these two parcels and extend these opportunities. RB: Does metro north own any part of that? JT: No. I will get contact info for the property owners so I can get word out and make a connection, if they are willing to do anything and make a connection. EM: Where does the town line carry? JT: That's the BF town line there and one of the Smiths owns that property there, and allows off-road vehicles on his property. They often cross over into that property from NY.

JT: I would like to get the cars towed. KJ: They are more like car skeletons. JT: They had to be there at least two decades. RB: How do we remove them? JT: I have to see how the trees have grown around, need to see if we can get a wrecker in there. If there is a clearing through the trees. RB: Can they be dismantled? AK: There could be a reservoir of lubricants and oil that could let out if you did. RB: It never hurts to ask the fire department. KJ: One of the fires in 2020 was by one of the abandoned cars, a brush fire, but maybe getting the cars out deters that kind of behavior. AK: And having signs can give a message that people do come back there. JT: I can see if we can get a winch line there and lift it up, depending on what the situation is and acces. Probably not this summer but maybe fall I'd like to get them out. RB: The sooner the better, if people are setting those cars on fire we don't want brush fires. KJ: It doesn't guarantee that no one will do it again but gets a message out.

AK: There is another car, in the state forest. While on the open space topic another opportunity is the east block of Naugatuck state forest. Currently there are only two access points, one off into Bethany, off into 42, or up here. It would be really nice to access this from BF. JT: <gestures to map> That's the school, that's a farm, that's residential. How would you access this? AK: This one potential opportunity is a planned development to go into this spot, that may be an opportunity for the town to negotiate and get access into that space. EM: People tell me if you go up Rice Lane there was a road that went over up into the other side. JT: What was the name of the developer? KJ: Was it Charlie Edwards? AK: Yes. This is all private land so we'd have to acquire some access. JT: Because it's undeveloped that may be a possibility. AK: We would use the east block more if there was BF access. JT: For now we have to go to Naugatuck, KJ: And there is only street parking,

AK: So we have a great resource but we have to go up to Bethany or Naugatuck to use it, and for access to the west block we have Cold Spring Road, and that's a railroad property, or to go into Oxford. JT: And still horrible parking there. AK: So that makes it so valuable to have a parcel that we own. KJ: So much of our town is state forest but access points are so limited. AK: That is something I'd like to work to improve.

**11. Executive Session (if needed)**  
**No Executive Session.**

**12. Comments from the Public**  
**No comments.**

**13. Adjournment**

**Motion to adjourn at 7:39 P.M. EM/AK.** All Aye.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kerri Vardon  
Substitute Clerk, Conservation Commission