



TOWN OF PELHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Pelham, Massachusetts

Minutes for February 27, 2020

Present: Tilman Lukas, Dana MacDonald, David Gross, Richard Seelig

Also present: Janice Gifford, Chris Volonte (Kestrel Land Trust), Judith Eiseman (Planning Board)

The meeting was brought to order by Chair MacDonald at 7:03 PM.

Updates on Buffam Brook Community Forest, Well-Away Farm and Pemberton trail work

Chris Volonte from the Kestrel Land Trust reported on work that has been completed or is contemplated for three Pelham Parcels.

Community Forest. There was discussion of signage. It was suggested that an orange and black sign or signs be put up during hunting season at the kiosk. It was also suggested that space in the kiosk be made to post temporary, current materials. The Commission noted that the educational requirement for the Community Forest needs to be fulfilled. Chair MacDonald said that one such effort involved Paul Catanzaro from UMass who has had a class work at the forest. Ms. Volonte noted that Kestrel will have a birding program for children at the forest. Kestrel proposes to add trail connectors via the new parcel purchased from the McClungs. The connectors will be between trails in the previously conserved forest parcels. A new trail loop installed by Kestrel is getting use by cross country skiers. A figure 8 double loop trail is planned for the old Moose Tracks parcel. There was discussion of interpretive signage for some of the Community Forest trails. There was general agreement that permanent signage in the forest is not what the Commission would like. It might be appropriate to use temporary interpretive signage that changes as use of the parcels change. This temporary signage could perhaps link to programs to help fulfil the educational aspects of the forest.

Well-Away Farm: The trail work at Well-Away is complete. The swale adjacent to the reworked parking area has been working well during rain storms. Plowing has scuffed up the parking area; Chair MacDonald will contact DPW to ask them to put down more trap rock once plowing season has passed. The kiosk components for the trailhead at South Valley Road are fabricated and ready to install at any time. What remains is to replace the donor sign and clean up the entrance a bit.

Pemberton Memorial Forest: Ms. Volonte noted that kiosk parts are fabricated and the south parking area is installed and being used. The parking area is a bit smaller than we had discussed. There are two berms at either end that limit parking to one vehicle. There was discussion that the berms might be leveled out to allow easier access and parking for two vehicles. It was suggested that a small sign that indicates that parking is there could help direct cars to the parking pull-off. There was further discussion about the trail entrance near the

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parking pull-off. Since Mrs. Pemberton no longer lives across the street, we might consider putting in a parking area at the trailhead. That would entail moving the current barrier back about 15 feet and replacing the cable that is there with a couple of boulders. That would allow a couple of cars can park there and would allow a horse to easily pass the barrier. That would relocate the kiosk farther away from the road.

It was moved that the Commission pay from the Conservation Trust Fund \$2000 for kiosk installation, more trail improvement, signage, and stone work near the Pemberston Memorial Forest trail entrance. Seconded and approved unanimously.

Planning Board Stormwater and Solar Bylaws

Judith Eiseman from the Planning Board (PB) reported on ongoing work that impacts the Conservation Commission.

- 1) She noted that the PB received a grant to create a set of bylaws that could be adopted by small towns like Pelham to better regulate solar installations.
- 2) The PB is working toward a fix for our solar bylaw. The Commission and the PB feel that is important to limit forest clearings for solar installations that can be otherwise located on already disturbed land. Cutting thresholds for solar installations are to be established. To protect against erosion, limits on slope grade (8% or less) are to be established. There should be restrictions on habitat disruption and evidence presented that an alternate site is not available. Attention to recreational and scenic values must be considered. The PB and Energy Committee are working together to propose new language for the solar bylaw. Chair MacDonald noted that CAPS high impact areas should not be disturbed for any solar installation.
- 3) The PB still wants to have the Conservation Commission as the review board for review of projects that fall under the stormwater bylaw. The PB is currently working on revisions to the bylaw that may be presented to Fall Town Meeting.

Appointment of Janice Gifford to the Conservation Commission

It was moved that the Commission supports the application of Janice Gifford to be a Commissioner. Seconded and approved unanimously.

Minutes from the January 30, 2020 meeting

It was moved that the Commission approve the minutes from the January 30, 2020 meeting. Seconded and approved unanimously.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved that the meeting adjourn at 9:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted by David Gross

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Gross', is written over the typed name.