



Attendees:

- Sandy Goodspeed
- Ben Bade
- Scott Pim
- Liz Wilson
- Dan McCombs
- John Scully
- Joe Trombley

Absent: Jeff Leombruno

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm.

NHACC GUEST – Barbara Richter

Barbara Richter, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions, presented background information related to the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT), which allows for reduced taxes on properties kept in current use and taxation is based on current value when the land is brought out of current use for development. In Rockingham County, a majority of Conservation Commissions receive 50-100% of LUCT contributions. In Epping, the Conservation Commission receives 10% (and \$50,000 cap), with 90% diverted to the Town general fund. Should the Commission be interested in proposing a warrant article to increase the percent received, Ms. Richter suggested the Commission conduct community outreach (information sessions, flyers, social media, etc) to help residents understand what LUCT is. Topics would include why open space is important, an outline of funds received to date and associated projects completed, as well as plans for future projects that could be completed with additional LUCT money.

Sandy Goodspeed asked if increasing the LUCT contribution to the Commission would impact the tax rate. Joe Trombley noted that the general fund, to which 90% of the LUCT money is now diverted, is not a predictable revenue source for the Town; therefore, the general fund is not factored into the Town budget. The change in the LUCT contribution would only impact the tax rate in the event that the Selectmen voted to use the general fund to buy down the tax rate. The Commission discussed the possibility of proposing 50% of LUCT money (with no cap) go to the Commission, with the remaining 50% going to the general fund. Scott Pim indicated that if the Commission was able to receive more LUCT funds, there would be greater potential to match grant funding opportunities and take the lead on conservation projects, rather than accepting a secondary contributor role.

PROPERTIES

Guest: Mr. Dave Richards and Mr. Kevin Martin, Epping residents

Mr. Martin has observed large pine trees along the Lamprey River by Jacobs Well Road in the vicinity of the parcel Mr. Richards previously expressed a desire for the Commission to conserve on Jacobs Well Road. Sandy Goodspeed noted she researched Lot 5, which the Town took for

taxes. The town is likely holding it for a period of time to provide the owner with an opportunity to purchase the land back. Joe Trombley indicated that timeframe may now be up. Scott Pim said that, similar to Low Park, the Town could assign the Commission as responsible for Lot 5. Scott will talk to the Selectmen regarding the Commission's interest in Lot 5 as a conservation property. The Commission could then consider how to connect it with other properties (assuming owner agreement) along Jacobs Well Road for potential conservation easements.

Sandy's Replacement

Guest: Mr. Gabe Porter - Mr. Porter attended the meeting out of potential interest in transitioning into Sandy Goodspeed's position. Mr. Porter provided background information about himself, his interest in trail maintenance, biking, the outdoors, and contributing to the Community. He intends to formally express interest in the position following a few months of shadowing Sandy and gaining a better understanding of her role on the Commission.

Low Park Work Day

Ben has a list of volunteers for the Thursday 9/29/22 work day. Six volunteers from Vapotherm are scheduled to be in attendance with Ben to clear the Low Park trail.

Rose Marie Dumas Survey proposal – Scott

Scott has no update. This topic will stay on agenda for next month.

George H Fall Woods

Dan McCombs reported the sign invoice has been paid, the posts have been ordered, and installation is planned for October.

Miriam Jackson Park – Joe and Liz

Spraying has been completed at the park. Liz Wilson provided Barbara Willis with some monarch garden plant lists and layout resources. Barbara is working on the design, and Liz will assist as needed.

ADMIN

The Commission agreed to move the November and December meeting dates to November 16th and December 14th in the small conference room. They also agreed to start the meetings at 6:00pm allowing Joe to attend another town meeting at 7:00pm.

Budget update – Dan

- The most recent account report is August 2022
- Escrow \$3,729.94
- LUCT account \$95,718.85
- Town budget \$2,141.87
- Trust Fund \$2,000

Tech

Dan updated the website and Facebook account with a reminder about the photo contest end date. Ben Bade mentioned that volunteer photos have been taken, and could also be posted on the website.

Photo Contest

Dan McCombs reposted the photo contest on the Facebook page. Liz contacted Joyce about posting the information on the Town Hall sign.

Outreach

John Scully is working on an article about a NH Fish and Game project related to selective harvesting to promote sunlight in the understory and vegetation growth to benefit the habitat.

Liz Wilson will present information about the Commission and the internship opportunity at Epping Middle High School on October 6th. Liz has been in communication with the Epping Elementary School science teacher to organize a bioblitz event. White Pine Programs has been contacted to incorporate a bioblitz event into the existing programming at the school during the 2022-2023 school year. Liz will host a Commission table at the SELT Trailfest event on October 15th. The table will have an open space map, activity/raffle, volunteer sign up information, etc. The Commission voted to approve reimbursing Liz up to \$200 for a raffle prize and up to \$100 in materials for the Trailfest table. On a related note, Liz will request a quote from the County Planning Commission for an updated conservation land map. Liz is also in contact with the Kensington Conservation Commission for collaboration opportunities and to obtain information about how to organize a fundraising trail race.

Beard Sand Pit

Liz had no update on Beard Sand Pit

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 9:35pm.