

TEMPLE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes, July 8, 2020

Location: Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

Attendees: Scott Hecker, Cathy Joly, Sean Radcliffe, Honey Hastings

Absent: Lincoln Geiger, Adie Krulis, Carol Mamczak

Guests: Eric Foley, Mike Madden

Started at 7:08 pm

1. Honey and Eric offered edits to minutes: “Holt” not “Hope”, “Kullgren”, “Allan Oxman”, and the correction that Allan oversaw the 1980 harvesting. Honey moved to accept the June 2020 minutes as amended, Scott seconded. Roll call vote: Honey yes, Sean yes, Cathy yes, Scott yes.
2. Water Testing: Sean explained that since it is difficult to have a presentation, to hand out kits, and to collect the kits in this pandemic, he suggested postponing the event until next spring. Honey moved that we delay the planning for this event until January or February, Sean seconded. Roll call vote: Honey yes, Sean yes, Scott yes, Cathy yes.
3. Temple Land Research Committee: Scott shared that they met at the Elementary School to view the lot there; it includes forest and part of the ballfield, about 18 acres. Tim felt the lot was too far from the center of town to be a good location for the highway department. Honey noticed a marked trail leading from the school to the pumping station; it is an emergency exit for the school. Honey thought some of the land could be hayed; Scott thought it might be good for a community garden. Then the group travelled to the junction of Old Peterborough Rd and Rt 45 to look at the 4 town-owned lots. The 2 northernmost lots are steep, rocky, and not ideal for building. The southern 2 lots are more buildable. The southernmost lot connects diagonally to John Kieley’s land, which has a trail along the back leading to Temple Mtn. Tim Fiske had talked to the property owners who live in between these lots, and they expressed some interest in buying part of the lot(s) to extend their property. Scott mentioned a 3 acre parcel abutting the beaver pond on Chris Weston, owned by George Willard, and some interest on George’s part about swapping land. The next meeting is this Saturday, July 11, to look at lots behind the municipal building as well as the current location of the highway department. Meet at 8:00am at the municipal building. Honey explained that ultimately, after touring all these parcels, the committee will discuss what to do with them and make recommendations to the Select Board. Sean asked if they want to do something with all town-owned land; Honey said they want a plan for each lot that is currently unused.

4. Town Forest: Scott shared that Carol and her husband finished the trail blazing. Next steps are to make a map and update the signage. Eric has purchased supplies to repaint the signs. He is still looking for the extra Con Com signs. *Eric will take a picture of an existing sign and send it to Carol, asking if she can look for them in the file cabinet in the municipal building.* Eric mentioned that the sap line trash is still out there and needs to be addressed. Eric met with Allan Oxman and walked the Town Forest. Allan didn't remember if the ant mounds were there in 1980. The previous harvest was a selective timber cut with the goal of generating money; Allan suggested we could do another selective timber cut, or alternatively a selective firewood cut. Allan was disappointed that the areas opened up by the prior harvest were not growing as well as expected; the birch, red maple, and beech looked suppressed, and there wasn't much new conifer growth of hemlock or pine. Forester Ethan Belair had suggested creating 3-5 acre open patches to create habitat for wildlife; Allan agreed with the idea of small open cuts but thought that 3-5 acres was too large given the total acreage. Allan suggested that 1/3 to 1/2 acre openings would be better and have less negative impact on the property; also Allan didn't think this was necessary for the wildlife, but rather for releasing the suppressed undergrowth. In general Allan shared that the entire forest doesn't need to be managed the same way, at the same time, given the different sections of the forest. The forest to the right of the parking area has no trails, so perhaps that could be an area for logging, which would create new trails. Eric explained that a lot of new logging is done with bigger machinery, creating bigger trails, and requiring a bigger landing area. Allan thought that type of logging would not be best for the Town Forest, rather a more conventional logging with smaller machines and hand-cutting with chainsaws would be better. Eric pointed out that Allan is not suggesting that logging needs to happen; if nothing happens, it would be ok. Some trees are struggling - white birch and beech are declining, ash are troubled by emerald ash borer, hemlocks by woolly adelgid - so some work would benefit the property eventually. Allan is willing to meet with us online or to walk the forest when it's safe and his schedule permits. Eric noticed new logging being done across the road from the Town Forest. The Con Com thanks Eric and Allan for taking the time to gather and share this helpful information. Scott suggested it would be nice to have a Con Com walk along the trails as soon as it's safe to do so.
5. Town Forest Plan Update: Eric wants to read the conservation easement; Sean recently requested it from Monadnock Conservancy so *Sean will forward the easement to the group.* Eric reiterated the sections of the Town Forest Plan that he wants to update that he shared at the last meeting. Honey asked if he would update, in layman's terms, the changes to the forest's health; also to include different options under the recommendations section. We are all in agreement that we don't need a new timber inventory at this time; Eric noted that individual sections of the plan could be updated at a later time if desired. Scott envisions that as the forest becomes an educational

resource, we will write about the history, health, habitats along the trail, highlighting the features of the property; this doesn't need to be in the forest plan, so Eric suggested it could be an addendum. Scott asked if the aerial imagery could be refreshed; Eric wants to update it but isn't sure we will see any changes since 2012. Scott would like to add an aerial image with the boundaries marked, showing more of the surrounding land. Scott asked if other forest plans had sections that weren't in ours; Eric explained that some plans have very well-defined objectives with timelines, but that is not what we are aiming for. How much will this cost? Sean suggested that if we know how much it will cost, we could put in our budget request for next year. Honey thought that we used conservation funds to pay for the aquifer studies; *Scott will confirm this with Lincoln*. Honey explained that the Con Com is charged with stewarding our conserved lands, and updating this Town Forest plan is part of good stewardship, so it is reasonable to use our conservation funds. What we need is a scope of the work and cost from Eric. *Eric will write a proposal* for the work he needs to do, a timeframe, and a price breakdown to be discussed at our August meeting, and he will email this to the group prior to the meeting so anyone who cannot attend the meeting can offer input. Eric will figure out how to make new maps in the meantime.

6. *Cathy will reach out to Adie*. Honey suggested that if Adie cannot attend meetings, we need another alternate to help us achieve quorum. Sean wondered if Mike might be interested in becoming an alternate; *Scott will reach out to Mike*. Eric has considered rejoining but is unsure where he will be in the future. Honey made a motion that we ask the Select Board to appoint Mike Madden as an alternate member subject to Scott getting Mike's approval first. Sean seconded. Roll call vote: Scott yes, Honey yes, Sean yes, Cathy yes.

The group adjourned at 8:29 pm. The next meeting will be Wednesday, August 12, 2020 at 7:00 PM.

Minutes submitted by Cathy Joly.

Italics above indicate tasks to be done.