

# TEMPLE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes, May 13, 2020

Location: Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

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

Absent: Adie Krulis, Lincoln Geiger

Guests: Mike Madden, Eric Foley, Anne McBride

Started at 7:04 pm

1. Honey suggested one change to the April 8, 2020 meeting minutes, Sean seconded; roll call vote: Honey yes, Sean yes, Carol yes, Cathy yes, Scott yes.
2. Anne McBride has been with the Monadnock Conservancy (MC) since 2008; they used to have a program where a representative from each town kept MC abreast of any community conservation projects, and they helped towns create conservation plans. These days, landowners may approach MC regarding a project and then MC may reach out to the town's Con Com, or a Con Com may approach MC for help on a project. Anne currently monitors the Weston Farm conservation easement. Our goal is to be more proactive in reaching out to landowners and to learn more about how conserving land works. Anne explained that the properties they accepted easements on 20 years ago may be viewed differently today; as they have realized their "perpetual responsibility" to monitor easements, they are more critical of whether land has conservation value. So any potential properties should be run by the MC first to make sure they are interested. Conservation value is judged on many factors: size; conservation layers within GIS; smaller size is generally not interesting unless it has extraordinary conservation value, i.e. 1/2 mile of undeveloped frontage on a lake; connection to other conserved lands; tier 1 or 2 wildlife action plan layer within GIS, maybe tier 3; soils; aquatic resources; underlying water-supply aquifer; agriculture; forestry; recreation; cultural resources; a link in a trail corridor; partnerships/collaborations; pre-identified by communities as important for conservation; climate resilience properties [as classified by Nature Conservancy]. Recently, MC has been conserving a lot of farmland and ecological/wildlife resources. It is also helpful if the landowner is willing to donate the easement; MC can usually find funding for their own processing/legal fees/staff time. However if MC has to purchase an easement, it is harder to find funding for that. For example to apply for LCHIP funds, it has to be a super project, with the town putting in money, a lot of town support, a reference in the master plan, an open space plan stating the importance of the conserved land. Temple's open space plan is over 10 years old; Temple Con Com has put multiple small properties under conservation with the MC in the past, with the Con Com paying for purchasing the easement plus transaction costs.

LCHIP is a more stable source of funding now that the \$25 fee for recording documents at the Registry of Deeds goes into the fund. Anne is a member of NH Land Trust Coalition; their policy specialist from the NH Forest Society is concerned that the LCHIP fund may be raided during this pandemic. The NH Land Trust Coalition just updated their publication *Conserving Your Land, Options for NH Landowners*; on their website, [nhlhc.org](http://nhlhc.org), click on Conserving Your Land and you can download the pdf; this is written in layman's terms, walking the landowner through the conservation process; this is a helpful document for us to pass along to landowners. *Honey suggested posting a link to this document on our website. Scott will forward the email that Anne sent him.* Questions for Anne can be directed to [anne@monadnockconservancy.org](mailto:anne@monadnockconservancy.org).

3. Elections: Honey suggested that we assume the membership terms in the 2019 town report are correct. Honey moved that we recommend the Select Board appoint Cathy Joly to a 3-year term to expire in 2023; Carol seconded; Honey yes, Sean yes, Carol yes, Scott yes. Honey moved that we ask the town to use the list in the 2019 town report for membership terms; Carol seconded; Honey yes, Sean yes, Carol yes, Scott yes, Cathy yes. *Cathy will notify Carole of these decisions.*
4. Water testing: Honey shared that there will be no Harvest Festival. Sean suggested that we cannot plan for water testing yet, it would be hard to distribute and collect kits in a socially distant manner. Honey asked if it's worth having a water test without a presentation. Sean suggested that we postpone this decision until our July meeting.
5. Scott spotted a mother and 3 baby Mergansers out his window; the babies are black and fuzzy. :)
6. Town Forest update: Scott has been working on the trails, Eric and Sean helped as well. Trail is nice and wide and clear; almost finished except for 30 or 40 yards in far SE corner, where Scott came across a moose! Scott will continue this work. Scott cleared some brush around the lone pine to draw attention to the special tree. Eric shared that he and Miki Collier checked out the trails from a horse-riding perspective, verifying the clearance height. The entire trail is horse friendly except for some areas of boulders; we welcome suggestions from riders; Scott thought gravel fill between the boulders could help. Eric suggested changing the parking area, pushing the rocks back so a horse trailer or schoolbus could park; Scott suggested that it be properly graded, with gravel, as a future project if enough people make use of the trails. Ben Fiske has not acted on our request to remove maple sugaring taps and trash. Ben's response to the sap lines extending into the Town Forest was that they weren't crossing trails; Honey wrote the sugaring contract [which ended spring of 2019] which charged a fee per tap. Honey suggested a followup in writing; *Scott will follow up in email.* Scott noted that the blazes in Monson Village - bright yellow vertical stripes - look good from far away, but are very

high, maybe 10' up. Carol likes how the trails avoid the wetlands, and is happy to do blazing when ready; Scott thinks we can proceed with blazing the main trail with yellow. After discussion, the height of blazes will be 5-6' up. Honey moved to vote that *Carol order the yellow paint*; Sean seconded, Honey yes, Carol yes, Sean yes, Cathy yes, Scott yes. Eric reached out to friend at the NH Forest Society for guidance on maintaining wooden signs, and he will touch up the existing signs; thank you!

7. Town Forest plan: Eric is still interested in updating the plan and already has considered what needs to change; he's unsure of the time and cost and will reach out to others who write forest plans for guidance. Honey asked Eric to get back to us when he is ready.
8. Town Land Research Committee: the committee is looking at the parcels owned by the town. Scott and Honey attended their Zoom meeting. They discussed the small lot across from the municipal building, which backs up to the Skladany property on General Miller Highway; there will be a walk there on June 6. Honey shared that with the town's loss in revenue due to COVID-19, Tim Fiske thought that the town may be looking to sell the 4 parcels on Route 45 near Old Peterborough Road. We had previously worked on planning a trail from the Chris Weston property, through those parcels, to connect to the trail that heads up Temple Mountain. It was difficult due to the steep and rocky terrain of the northern parcels, and the sharp corner with minimal visibility on Rt 45 of the southernmost parcel. All agreed that we need to decide on this soon. *Scott will forward the committee's email showing the town lots.*

The group adjourned at 8:42 pm. The next meeting will be Wednesday, June 10, 2020 at 7:00 PM.

Minutes submitted by Cathy Joly.

*Italics above indicate tasks to be done.*