

TEMPLE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes, June 9, 2021

Location: Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

Attendees: Sean Radcliffe, Scott Hecker, Carol Mamczak, Mike Madden, Cathy Joly

Absent: Adie Krulis, Lincoln Geiger, Jeff Jenson

Guest: Dave Repak

Started at 7:04 pm

1. Roll call attendance: Scott Hecker, Mike Madden, Carol Mamczak, Sean Radcliffe, Cathy Joly.
2. Approval of Minutes: Carol clarified that she seconded both minute approvals. Scott moved to accept the May 19, 2021 meeting minutes as amended, Sean seconded. Roll call vote: Scott yes, Mike yes, Carol yes, Sean yes, Cathy yes.
3. Conservation Easement Details: We discussed the document that Dave Repak, former Con Com member, created from his experience conserving properties [attached]. Discussion included the list of fees involved in placing an easement (land survey, legal costs, easement processing costs); some landowners are willing to pay for these costs (Kieley and Scott), whereas others ask for funds (Weston and Beaudoin) which can come from the Conservation Fund. The Con Com decides how much funding to offer based on acreage and similar properties already conserved, along with help from any land trust that will own the easement (Monadnock Conservancy (MC) in many cases). Note that Mountain View Farm received LCHIP funds and the easement is owned by the town. MC processing costs depend on how much time they will work on the easement; their land committee walks the property and votes on whether to proceed with the easement, and they write the easement. To conserve our town-owned properties, our only cost was ~\$10k to MC for processing. To go forward with an easement, we need approval from MC and the Select Board (they have to approve all expenditures from the Conservation Fund). Con Com worked hard to educate residents about the value of easements, held many public meetings and invited MC to present. Timeline to complete the entire process is at least six months, depending on MC's timeline and how motivated the landowner is. When MC presented at our meeting recently, they explained that their requirements for easement properties are more strict now: they are looking for important natural resources or to connect conserved land. Consider these corridors: Mountain Lane to Vivian Wills, White

Ledges to Chris Weston to John Kieley to Temple Mountain, Heald Tract in Wilton to Fiske Hill to East Road. To approach people about potential easements, concentrate on what is good for the property, find landowners who feel strongly about protecting their land; if they are not looking for a lot of money, Con Com can just cover the easement expenses; if they are looking for money, we can pay them a modest amount to purchase the development rights. In summary, one way to conserve property is for the landowner to work with a land trust directly (and not involve the Con Com at all), or alternatively the Con Com can facilitate the process between the landowner and the land trust and 'sweeten the pot' by offering funding. Landowners may be concerned in the latter case that the Con Com will have a say in the monitoring of the property, but that is negotiable; if Conservation Fund money is funding the easement, we do want the public to have access to the property. The Forest Society has a helpful Conservation Fund Guide for Municipalities on their website. Thank you, Dave, for sharing your wisdom and experience!

4. Town Forest, June 5 special meeting: Dave asked if MC has contacted us to walk the property recently. *Scott will contact MC about this.* During the walk-through, Sean removed a big beech that had fallen across the trail; Carol noted one more spot to add blazing; the ants were extremely active and had spread out about 30 yards from the hills and were biting!
5. Chris Weston trail: This needs work especially on the north side; the south side is nearly finished. *Chris Weston trail workday for June 19, 2021 at 8:30am;* we will be marking and cutting the trail.
6. Kiosk: Mike found 2 potential plans; held discussion for next meeting. Mike is on the agenda for the next Select Board meeting to ask where we can place a kiosk on the White Ledge's road.
7. Land Conservation Strategy: Mike created a draft list of conservation property goals for a future in-person meeting when we can brainstorm.
8. Conservation of Lot 7-35: Scott will be at town meeting to answer any questions about this.

The group adjourned at 8:27 pm. The next regular meeting will be on Wednesday, July 14, 2021 at 7:00 PM.

Minutes submitted by Cathy Joly.

Italics above indicate tasks to be done.

Attachments:

1. Dave Repak's notes on Conservation Easements

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Determine whether the property would qualify as a good candidate for an easement: Discuss with members of the Conservation Commission and decide if pursuing an easement on this property would be beneficial.

Meet with the landowner: Determine the owner's desires. Does he/she want some payment for putting the property under easement or is he/she willing to pay for the associated expenses. If he willing to donate all the costs, put him/her in touch with Anne McBride at the Monadnock Conservancy (603-357-0600). Easements on properties owned by John Kieley, Martha Scott, and Richard McAdoo were processed directly with the Conservancy with no costs incurred by the town. Easements on Priscilla Weston and Lisa Beaudoin properties were processed using town funds.

If some payment is being requested, discuss a reasonable payment with other members of the Conservation Commission, comparing previous payments for similar properties and acreages. See if the landowner would accept the offer. Determine if there has been a recent property survey. Decide with the landowner what restrictions there should be included in the easement.

Contact the Monadnock Conservancy (Anne McBride) to see if they would accept this property as a project. Part of their process is a visit to the property by their Lands Committee. A member of the Con Com should accompany the Lands Committee on their visit to answer any of their questions. Locate the boundaries of the parcel. Once the Committee agrees to accept this property as an easement project, they will assign a representative to work with the Con Com representative.

Obtain Select Board Approval to Proceed: Schedule a briefing to the Board on the reasonableness of placing an easement on this property and the costs associated with the project. Determine if town meeting approval is required. Once approved, the Conservancy will prepare a draft easement document for

our review. Once Select Board and Con Com concur with the document, a joint signature meeting should be scheduled. The Conservancy will then have the document registered with the Register of Deeds.