

Warner Conservation Commission

Minutes of Meeting
July 5, 2017 at 7:00 PM

Attending: Nancy Martin, Susi von Oettingen, Doug Allen, Alice Chamberlain, Phil Stockwell, Russ St. Pierre.
Also Attending: Ken Milender, Planning Board; Charlie Albano, Economic Development Committee; Andy Deegan, Ausbon Sargent Land Protection Trust.

Discussion:

1. Ausbon Sargent Land Protection Trust (ASLPT):

Andy Deegan updated the group on four parcels located off Brown Road (aka potential Brown Easement). The parcels have frontage on Hoyt Brook and are actively farmed. The Brown Easement is approximately 150 acres total. Andy indicated that ASLPT submitted a LCHIP application requesting approximately \$120K to establish a conservation easement. If successful, the requested match from the town would be approximately \$75 to \$78K. Additional sources of outside funding are being pursued.

The group discussed the status of the property as agricultural land. To obtain LCHIP funding, the land must be left open to the public. As agricultural land, with grazing pastures, frequent traverse by the public may be disruptive to livestock. While traverse across grazing pastures would be allowed under the future easement, it may be a concern to the property owners. The details of the easement could be worked out with the property owners.

The group discussed the status of LCHIP funding. Andy indicated that there is currently \$3.5 to \$3.8M in available funding. The state currently has approximately \$5M in funding requests. Andy thought the odds of the Brown Easement receiving funding were quite good. The property has some of the highest ranked habitat in the state, and is historically, culturally and economically important as an active farm. The timing for the LCHIP award is October or November 2017. Following award, the timing would be finalizing the easement within a period of 2 years.

2. Update on Future Easements:

The group discussed the status of future easement properties:

Riverfront Map 29, Lot 4: Nancy indicated that the parcel had been purchased by a Warner resident. The lot is 8 to 9 acres in size with buildable land. This lot was purchased to facilitate the right-of-way easement for the future rail trail.

Willow Brook: Nancy plans to meet with the Board of Selectmen (BOS) on 18 July 2017. The request will be to withdraw \$26K from the conservation fund to complete the easement with the Five Rivers Conservation Trust. A public information session/hearing will be held in August 2017.

Warner Farmland (ASLPT): See discussion above, Agenda Item 1.

Riverfront Map 7, Lot 1: The town's purchase offer of \$7,600 is still in State committee. No new updates.

Stearns Easement: Actively pursued by SPNHF, no new updates.

4. Warner River Watershed Projects:

The group discussed the status of the Warner River Watershed projects.

River Nomination Hearing: Nancy indicated that she received a letter from the State indicating that the Warner River nomination application had been accepted. A public hearing regarding the nomination, run by NHDES and the NH Rivers Management Advisory Committee, is scheduled for July 11th at Town Hall. Also, an article regarding the river nomination appeared in The Concord Monitor today.

Flood Resiliency: Culverts in town have been surveyed for flood hazard including overall condition and appropriate sizing (during a flood). This information can be overlaid with data collected on the ease of passage for wildlife as a consideration for the Town Road Agent while prioritizing culverts for maintenance or replacement. The flood resiliency information has been summarized on a map of town titled “Status of Stream Crossings within the Warner River Watershed”.

Volunteer River Assessment Project (VRAP): The volunteer river monitoring project is underway, with seven sites scheduled for summer and fall monitoring. A suggestion was made to engage KRHS students as volunteers. The monitoring does require a certain level of training since scientific equipment is used in the field.

5. A Walk in the Minks:

Nancy reported that the last walk in the Mink Hills covered roads in an area north of Bear Pond. These roads appeared to have sustained more damage than roads covered on previous walks.

In a related issue, an amendment to House Bill 327 creating a crossing of NH Rout 114 in Henniker was passed by the Conference Committee; don't know if the Governor will sign it. This crossing will feed into the westerly end of Cunningham Pond Road in Warner and could significantly increase OHRV use on Town roads. The bill did not contain provisions for increased patrolling.

6. Warner Economic Development Committee Update

Charlie Albano, chairman of the committee, discussed the recently completed report to the Selectmen. (Available on Town's web page under “Minutes”.) He discussed the Committee's purpose and noted the work of their subcommittees focusing on four (4) specific sectors:

1. Organization and Education,
2. Business Retention and Expansion,
3. Business Development, and
4. Tourism.

The Committee will be conducting a town-wide survey on the types of businesses the residents would like to have in Warne. Nancy will send Charlie a reminder to include something on recreational uses.

7. Davisville Bridge Walk:

Nancy walked the parcel with Mike Amaral and Francesca _.

8. Town-Owed Lots on North Road

Nancy, Russ, and Colin walked the two Town-owned parcels (lots 5 and 9 on tax map 18). Both lots are located on the westerly side of North Road and extend to Stevens Brook. Both lots have a narrow band of level land adjacent to the road and then slope steeply to the west towards the brook. Lot 5 looks like it might have been excavated for gravel in the past, but is now forested. Lot 9 is also forested, but with older growth.

3. Approve June Minutes:

The Minutes of June 7, 2017 were approved with minor corrections

Items 9 to 12 were tabled until the August meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

The next meeting is August 2, 2017, at 7:00 PM.