

NCC Minutes 12/19/23

Open meeting 7:02 p.m.

Present: C. Griffith, J. Couture, D. Mason, J. Lent, A. Watts, L. Hill, F. Hayden, M. Kessler
resident- A. Tenhaagen

1) Administrative Business:

- a) Minutes 11/20/23- J. Couture motions to accept as amended, C. Griffith seconds, all in favor YES.
- b) Treasurer's report- J. Couture motions to accept, C. Griffith seconds, all in favor YES.

2) New Business:

- a) SELT habitat work in the Greenway
A. Watts- they did work in the previously cleared area to sustain early successional habitat.
- b) Easement monitoring report for Girard
J. Lent sent everyone copies to review. J. Couture noticed a few boxes weren't checked. J. Lent will rectify. J. Couture motions to accept the report as amended, D. Mason seconds, all in favor YES.
- c) Potential for using a beaver deceiver to mitigate flooding on the rail trail.
-L. Hill- the Beavers had built a dam in the area of the Byrne easement and a lodge that was encroaching on the rail trail. A couple of weeks ago, someone bulldozed the lodge and the dam which was understandable but they also took out the old lodge further east as well as that dam which caused the entire wetland to drain. This area has been an established wetland for years, supported diverse wildlife and posed no threat to the rail trail. It is not clear whether this was done by the trails bureau or the snowmobile club. Ellen Snyder wrote a letter of protest to Mike Weeks of the trails bureau but has not heard a reply. Weeks has been communicating with a Newmarket resident , Drew Kiefaber, who had complained about the new lodge and the latest communication mentioned trapping.
- L. Hill also contacted Mike Weeks about whether the new owner of the Chix property had obtained permission to build a crossing across the rail trail that he constructed a couple of months ago just east of the aforementioned wetland. M. Weeks replied that he did not have permission and he would contact him. L. Hill has not heard any more on the issue and the crossing is still intact.
- All agreed that the town of Newfields should be consulted before any work is done on the rail trail. L. Hill will try to find out who did the excavating.
- Will try to have Ellen Snyder come to the next meeting to discuss the potential use of a beaver deceiver.
- d) Recycling- J. Lent stated that the selectmen voted not to include recycling in next years budget. He asked whether the NCC would contribute \$15,000 towards continuing it. All agreed that that is not really our mission which is to conserve land.

3)Old Business:

- a) Rugg-
J. Couture- Word Barn meeting on 12/6/23 went well and was very well attended indicating alot of support. Also met with the Exeter Selectmen 12/18 who were also supportive. They will have a warrant article on the March ballot to approve support. The

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boundary issue will not be resolved in time to ask for funding. It should be resolved by mid-January. There will be a citizen's petition at the Newfields Country store on 12/21 from 3- 6 p.m. for people to sign in support of the warrant article.

- L. Hill asked who will write the warrant article. J. Couture replied it will be the Trust for Public Land's legal team. C. Griffith stated that we need to be able to review it before it's submitted to be sure it is clear.
- J. Couture- TPL also just submitted the LWCF grant. Also, a grant for a low interest loan for \$2.5 million has been approved, \$500,000 of which may be forgiven.
- A. Ten Haagen mentioned that most warrant articles expire after a year and would like us to make sure that this one doesn't. J. Couture replied that he will speak to TPL.
- A. Ten Haagen asked M. Kessler whether the selectboard would remain neutral on the matter of the warrant article. M. Kessler eventually replied that they couldn't as they will have to vote on whether or not to recommend it.
- A. Ten Haagen then stated he had been getting conflicting information from the selectmen as to whether they are pursuing having an impact study done. M. Kessler replied that he thinks it should be done and he would recommend it be done at their next meeting or do it himself.
- A. Ten Haagen stated that if the board is to vote on whether or not to recommend the warrant article they are obligated to do an impact study as a development could potentially increase the number of homes in Newfields by 10% . Would the increase in tax revenue offset all the potential economic and environmental costs? He asked whether M. Kessler had talked to the school board, fire and police chiefs, etc.,etc. and whether he had contacted anyone to do the study or found out how long it would take and what the cost would be.
- M. Kessler replied that he had not as of this time.
- A. Ten Haagen reiterated that it would need to be completed in the time the selectboard decided to have it done and Feb.6th which would be 4 weeks at most and that he has serious doubts that it can be done in that amount of time.

4) No mail

5) Next meeting 1/15/2024

Adjourn 8:10 p.m.

NCC member L. Hill, 1219/23