Bethlehem Conservation Commission

February 24, 2022

6pm

Library

**Minutes**

Present: Lindsay Webb, Cheryl Jensen, Margaret Gale, Nicole McGrath, Vivian Winterhoff, Liaison Veronica Morris.

Absent: Alternate Marilyn Johnson

Guest: Barry Zitser, Nancy Strand

Public Comment:

Barry sent the BCC a letter about the recycle right campaign through the NRRA. He has spoken with the Selectboard and they are in support of the program. Barry would like the Town to have a few representatives from Bethlehem for the program. Margaret and Lindsay signed up for emails to receive this information and help to share the information on social media. Nicole suggested that we check with someone at Casella to make sure that we are not sending information out that conflicts with how things are down at our local transfer station. The program is free and helps to educate and empower citizens to recycle better.

Barry also brought up a concern about dog waste. He suggested using some American Rescue Fund money to put up a few dog bag stations. Veronica suggested putting one up near the bike servicing station.

The BCC sent up a mock zoom to try out the owl camera to see if it would work for holding hybrid meetings in the future. The owl performed well under these conditions.

Litter-Free Campaign:

Cheryl gave a legislative update. The increased fines for littering bill was inexpedient to legislate. The recycle bottle bill has been referred for interim study. The bill that would authorize municipalities to collect and sell construction and demolition debris, motion ought to pass but they are waiting on an interim study before the determination, currently in committee. The bill that would allow municipalities to regulate use of plastic bags voted inexpedient to legislate. The bill that authorizes municipalities to collect compost will be discussed on March 1st. The bill to eliminate single use plastic Cheryl could not find any updates on. She called the committee and wasn't able to get any additional information. She had heard that it was withdrawn but was not able to confirm.

Signs:

There may be some anti littering signs available from the NRRA. Signs on Maple St, Main St, Whitefield Rd, Route 3, and West Forest Lake Rd, will need permission from Lancaster DOT. The highway department can install signs on the roads once we have received the appropriate permissions. The basketball courts are a high litter area, Elm St ballfields is another location that may need some anti-litter signage. Prospect St is another high litter area. Intersection of Wing and Prospect St. Do we need landowner permission if the sign is within the road’s right of way. Permission may not be strictly necessary but it may be helpful to consult with the landowner prior to installing any signs.

Adopt a spot program:

Nancy Strand, member of the Transfer Station Committee, had litter concerns, she researched what other communities are doing and brought her research to the Selectboard. She liked the model used in Keene. The Selectboard sent the information about the adopt a spot program to the Conservation Commission. In Keene they put up signage, she feels this should be optional, the signs cost about $100. The public works supplies vest and bags to the volunteers. Veronica also researched towns which use this program or something similar, all the towns she researched require a safety briefing. There is discussion on if the program is overly complicated, most of the rules and requirements stem from legal and liability reasons. Is there a way to simplify the process or have a non town sponsored unofficial adopt a spot program. Lindsay will review the information and see if she can simplify some of it and to create a google form with sign up, liability waiver, and safety orientation. Before the program can be implemented, it will need to be approved by the towns insurance company. Lindsay motioned that we look into starting the adopt a spot program, meaning Veronica will check in with primex, Cheryl seconded, 5-0.

2022 Roadside Clean-up:

Cheryl showed the Conservation Commission the new T-shirt with the Just Be Litter Free logo. T-shirts are in. Cheryl will reach out to Paul Greenlaw to get an invoice sent to the town. Margaret motioned to approve payment to Paul Greenlaw’s business for the prompt delivery of the t-shirts, Vivian seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ammonoosuc River Cleaning up is scheduled May 7th with a rain date of May 14th. The Annual Road side cleanup Saturday May 14th with a rain/snow date of May 21st, starting at 10:00 am. Lindsay will update the flier for distribution and Cheryl will check in with Linda to see how many bags we have left.

Minutes to Approve:

The BCC reviewed the minutes of January 27, 2022. Cheryl motioned to approve the minutes of the January 27th meeting, Vivian seconded, motion passed 5-0.

Treasurer’s Report:

The BCC has paid the NHACC dues of $250. In the savings account we have as of Feb 1st, $16,074.86. DIscussion on if the T-shirt will be paid out of the town account or the savings account? Margaret amended her motion to include that the payment of the t-shirts should come out of the savings account. Cheryl seconded, motion passed 5-0.

Mail:

Reviewed the mail items. Margaret had heard that DES has shortened the comment period for Conservation Commission; she will reach out to NHACC to see if she can verify this information. Margaret also reached out to Sue McClain from the Local Advisory Committee but did not have a response in time for tonight's meeting.

Outreach Poster:

Lindsay printed a sample of the outreach poster. The Conservation Commision members reviewed the poster. Changed “Who is the BCC?” to “What is the BCC?”. Poster can be used at roadside clean up and other town events, shared on facebook, put on the website, Town News and possibly in next year's Town Report. Lindsay will make the suggested edits and send the final copy out to everyone.

Town Forest:

The BCC reviewed and edited the liability form for use of the town forest. Veronica will forward the updated liability form to the town’s Insurance company for review.

Other/New Business:

Cheryl listened to a zoom presentation, 10 Towns, a program about recycling. She is looking into it and trying to find out additional information on how to participate. She also shared a news article about people having anxiety about climate change, its stressing people out, Eco-anxiety.

Discussion on how to educate the public and be proactive to prevent accidental violations. How should you handle a situation where someone posts on facebook or other social media about doing a project that may require additional permitting. Nicole suggested contacting the individual directly and letting them know that a permit may be required. If someone doesn't feel comfortable doing that they can forward the concern to the Selectboard or town code enforcement officer.

Cheryl moved to adjourn at 8:10pm, Lindsay seconded, motion passed 5-0.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole McGrath, Secretary

Next Meetings: 6pm (Library)

March 24

April 28

May 26