**Bethlehem Conservation Commission Meeting**

**April 9, 2022**

**10:00 am**

**Town Hall**

**Draft Minutes**

**Members Present:** Margaret Gale, Lindsay Webb, Cheryl Jensen, Veronica Morris (ex-officio)

**Public Present:** Angela Broscoe, Ivan Ash, Linda Moore, Chris Jensen, Vivian Winterhoff, Ginny Jeffryes

Lindsay called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Motion to renew Vivian Winterhoff as member from April 2022 – March 31, 2025 by Lindsay, Second by Margaret. Veronica will take it to the Selectboard for confirmation.

Discussion about whether Winterhoff could vote at this meeting as her term has expired and she has not been formally renewed yet. Decision was made to not have Winterhoff vote at this meeting.

Marilyn Johnson, BCC alternate, is also up for renewal this month. She has decided to not rejoin as an alternate member. BCC Members thank Marilyn for her ongoing support and commitment to conservation in Bethlehem.

**NH DES File #2022-00592, Subject Property 80 Guilder Lane –**

Lindsay presented the project. Margaret and Cheryl did some research in the past few weeks on the property. A draft letter was prepared by Margaret and Cheryl, reviewed by all, and much discussion ensued.

Permit identifies 43 units. Permitted forestry operation has already occurred on the property this winter. 140 acres is being put into the new condominium association lands.

In addition to comments from the BCC, the project will also get comments from NH Fish & Game. It is uncertain if this is what was noted in the letter from Gloria Andrews, DES, referencing that the project needed “a study by a biologist.” BCC letter will reference this.

Concerns from abutters:

* Ivan noted that there is a pileated woodpecker nesting on the property. He is concerned that the woodpecker is already losing habitat due to the wood cutting. He has observed this woodpecker and its progeny since 2007.
* Angela attended a meet and greet at the Adair and was concerned about the location of the houses. The cutting of trees has drastically changed the views and she is concerned about the water table impacts. Angela asked about the water usage and the increased draw on the aquifer.

BCC letter to DES will include:

* The concern that the overall change in habitat of the entire area is changing habitat for all wildlife.
* The proximity of the Wood Turtle sighting from Northern Pass project and concerns that all wildlife avoidance was not possible, according to the biologists working on Northern Pass. Attach appropriate documentation.
* Reference the DES letter looking for a wildlife study of the area from a biologist.
* Question about why possible mitigation was not an option according to wetlands permit.
* Public concerns identified at this BCC meeting: wildlife habitat loss and water table/aquifer questions.
* Note that any lawns on the property may also invite the use of fertilizer and pesticide use which may run off into the surrounding wetlands.
* Include photos from the packet that was presented to the planning board.
* Other minor phrasing changes were made to the draft letter.

After some discussion about the forestry operation, Lindsay clarified that the BCC can only comment on the wetlands permit before them.

The public and abutters were informed about their ability to write letters to DES with their concerns.

Cheryl Jensen made a motion to approve the letter with changes. Margaret second. Motion passed.

Ginny Jeffryes from the Franconia Conservation Commission leads wildflower walks on the Rocks Estate – may lead one specifically for area Conservation Commission members. Could be the first week of June on Friday. Need to limit to 10-12 people, approximately 3 hours, path can be moderately strenuous. More information will be coming about this.

**Next meeting** is April 28, 6pm, at the Bethlehem Public Library.

Motion to end the meeting at 10:47am from Lindsay. Second from Cheryl. Passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Veronica Morris and Lindsay Webb