**Bethlehem Conservation Commission (BCC) meeting**

**January 26th, 2023**

**DRAFT meeting minutes**

**Location:** Town Hall

**Committee members present:** Lindsay Webb, Margaret Gale, Cheryl Jensen, Vivian Winterhoff, Rachelle Lyons, Ivan Ash, Veronica Morris

**In attendance:** Chris Jensen, Barry Zitser, Betsey Phillipps

Lindsay called the meeting to order at 06:03 pm.

**Public comment**

**Transfer Station Committee update**

Sustainability concept brought forward to Select Board.

**Bethlehem Elementary School (BES)**

Contact person details at Gilford Transfer Station who coordinates events/visits were provided. Anonymous contributor will provide additional funds for the trip, if asked.

Can the BCC fund the bus, i.e. spend more from the BES field trip line item in the budget this year, seeing that we have not paid anything in the last three years (2020, 2021 and 2022)?

Lindsay will reach out to Sue Greenlaw, BES Principal, to obtain a cost estimate of the trip. Then the BCC can make a decision on how much to fund.

**Mail received**

**Adair letter of compliance**

The letter was issued by DES to confirm that their concerns had been addressed and the file was closed, but could be re-opened at any time in the future should information regarding additional violations on the property be received.

**Parker Rd wetland permit application**

There was concern that the person managing the project does not appear to be aware of the need to notify the BCC about wetland impacts.

The application was submitted in August 2022, then found incomplete (so NHDES made a request for more information in October 2022) and received a time extension.

Cheryl suggested that Margaret write a note to NHDES to express the BCC’s concern regarding suitability of the land for construction. Margaret agreed.

**Past meeting minutes to approve**

Update to the renaming of the Town Forest: The warrant article will be on the ballot, with recommendation from Select Board.

**Cheryl made a motion to accept the minutes from the Nov 17th, 2022, meeting with amendments agreed at this meeting. Lindsay seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Treasurer’s report**

**Account balances**

Town account balance: $0 (which is usual at this time of year).

Savings account balance: $18,292.55

**Annual NHACC dues**

**Cheryl made a motion to pay $250 NHACC dues. Lindsay seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

**BES Field Trip**

See minutes under “Public Comment”, BES Field Trip funds above.

**2022 Town report - draft**

**Cheryl motioned to adopt the annual report as drafted by Lindsay with amendments, as agreed at this meeting. Margaret seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Annual roadside clean-up**

It was agreed that the clean-up would be on Saturday, May 6th.

Lindsay won’t be available, so will need other members to do the jobs she normally takes care of. She’ll send the checklist of things to do for the clean-up ahead of time, which will also be discussed at upcoming meetings.

An idea of possibly purchasing $5 tokens from Super Secret Ice-cream was put forward, instead of providing ice-cream ourselves. There were 35 participants in last year’s clean-up.

**Member Term Dates / Reappointments**

Lindsay and Margaret’s terms are coming to an end and up for renewal.

Margaret is happy to continue to be a BCC and to be a Treasurer.

**Cheryl made a motion to recommend to the Select Board that Margaret Gale continue to be a member of the BCC *and* the Treasurer of the BCC from April 1st, 2023, to end March 31st, 2026. Ivan seconded. Motion unanimously approved.**

The BCC was saddened to hear that Lindsay is stepping down as Chair of the BCC at the end of March 2022. Any member considering becoming the Chair of the BCC, please contact Lindsay – ideally within the next month.

Lindsay has created a monthly to-do list for members to review while they consider stepping up to becoming the Chair. Lindsay pointed out that the duties of the Chair can also be structured differently, e.g. there could be two co-Chairs.

Cheryl said that other towns have monthly rotating Chairs and often one person is willing to take on the duty of Chair after having had an experience of the role. Duties can also be parceled out between members.

Veronica pointed out that if there was going to be a rotating Chair it would be helpful to have one contact point for Select Board and Town communication.

**New Sustainability Steering Committee**

A Town Sustainability Steering Committee is being considered by the Select Board. (An email about this was forwarded to BCC members on January 16th, 2023.)

This would be a group that sets goals and objectives for the Town in relation to environmental sustainability, and would then work with the committees and existing structure to implement them. This group would potentially meet 2-4 times per year, once up and running.

Its remit would cover food, water, waste, energy, building/construction.

Committee membership would include:

* Selectboard member
* Representative from the Energy Commission
* Representative from the Transfer Station Committee
* Representative from the Conservation Committee
* Building Inspector
* Representative from the Village District
* Two other residents

Bruce Caplain, who is the initiator of this idea, is seeking thoughts and input from BCC and other committee members.

Generally, BCC members agreed it is a good idea to coordinate between the Town’s committees, including on sustainability matters.

Rachelle volunteered to attend a first meeting.

**Other/New Business**

 **New potential BCC member**

Cheryl invited Betsey Phillipps to attend this BCC meeting to see if she might want to consider becoming a member. Betsey introduced herself.

**Cheryl motioned that the BCC recommend to the Select Board that Betsey Phillipps become a BCC member for a 3-year term** **from April 1st, 2023 to March 31st, 2026**, After discussion the proposed term was amended **to run from February 1st, 2023 to March 31st, 2026**, in order to have Bestey start her term immediately. **Vivian seconded.** **Motion unanimously passed.**

Lindsay pointed out that we can have any number of alternates for the BCC.

 **Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust (ACT) and Plymouth State University talks**

Rachelle is coming to talk to BES with Plymouth University and BES is visiting Plymouth University. The event at BES is open to the public.

 **NHACC Wetlands Identification Series**

Starts January 27th, 2023, 12pm on Zoom. It’s free for BCC members as we are a member of the NHACC.

 **Bethlehem Conservation Commission webpage progress**

The BCC webpage will have basic information about the BCC, including meeting times and a list of current members and their contact info. Agendas and minutes will be kept under the general “agendas and minutes” section of the website.

Veronica requested that BCC decides what else should be on this webpage. The recreation pamphlet, and NHDES Got Permits flyer, and introductory words need to be added.

**BCC members to consider what else can be added to the webpage and bring ideas to the next meeting.**

Once published, amendments to the webpage can be sent to anyone on the Town’s admin team.

**Next BCC meetings**

The next meetings will take place on February 23rd, March 23rd, and April 27th, 2023.

They’ll probably take place at the Town Hall, as the Library is not going to be available on the last Thursdays of the month going forward.

**Cheryl made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7.59pm. Seconded by Lindsay. Motion unanimously passed.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:59pm.**

Respectfully submitted by Vivian Winterhoff, Recording Secretary.