**Bethlehem Conservation Commission (BCC) meeting**

**February 23rd, 2023**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Location:** Town Hall and Zoom

**Committee members present:** Lindsay Webb, Cheryl Jensen, Betsey Phillips, Vivian Winterhoff, Veronica Morris, Margaret Gale (at 6:34pm), Ivan Ash (at 6:40), Rachelle Lyons (at 6:41)

**In attendance:** Barry Zitser, Paul Karpawich

Lindsay called the meeting to order at 06:08 pm.

**Public comment**

**New transfer station update**

Barry Zitser gave an update on the town applying for a USDA grant for building a modern transfer station. The application deadline is April 14th. An engineer was hired to draw conceptual plans and provide cost estimates. The proposed location is on Rt 116, North of Wing Rd, where an old transfer station used to be. 41 of the 64 acres are managed under a conservation easement with Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust.

The Select Board will make decisions on the scope of project and funding for it. The grant would be for 35% of the total costs.

Mary Moritz is the point of contact for this for the Town.

Barry has sent a supplemental draft report about some of the environmental assets of the town to go with the grant application and has requested feedback on its content. Could the BCC designate a member to work with the Transfer Station Committee on this report?

Cheryl volunteered to be the contact person from the BCC for the report.

**Other**

Barry Zitser also informed the BCC that the NRRA has applied for an educational grant to reach communities in Coos County and communities in Northern Grafton County.

**Mail received**

**Ledgewood Drive Wetlands Permit Application**

There was some discussion around the application to ascertain if the BCC wanted to comment. BCC members decided not to comment.

**NHACC membership renewal**

NHACC sent us a copy of the Conservation Commission handbook as part of our recent annual renewal to be a member.

**Past meeting minutes to approve**

**Lindsay made a motion to accept the minutes from the January 26th, 2023, meeting with amendments agreed at this meeting. Cheryl seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Treasurer’s report**

Account balances as of January 31st, 2023:

Town account balance: To be updated at next meeting. It should be negative for now by the amount of the NHACC annual dues until the new budget is approved by the Town.

Savings account balance: $18,293.35

**BES Field Trip**

Sue Greenlaw has stated that the buses to transport the children to and from Gilford would cost $399. This is for the trip to the Gilford recycling center, as previously discussed.

They are also working on another trip to Plymouth State University on March 22nd, which she said is more important than the Gilford recycling center fieldtrip. The plan is to have a climate change conversation. The children will go to a planetarium show, an ice core exhibit, go on a tree tour, participate in a climate change conversation, practice something creative (visual arts, poetry), and tour a residential hall. The cost of this trip will come to $414.

**Cheryl made a motion to cover both BES Field trips and therefore to take up to $820 for the two BES field trips discussed above out of the Savings Account. Betsey seconded.**

**There was some discussion around funding one trip partially. However, due to not having funded any field trips for the past 3 years, plus this year’s $500 budgeted amount, BCC members agreed that funding both trips was possible.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**2023 Social Media Campaign – “Water”**

Inspired by the recent Wetlands identification talk given via the NHACC and coming across an organization named “Water Stories” shortly thereafter, Vivian explained her idea to create a Facebook campaign to grow awareness around the importance of preserving our water.

As she drafted an outline plan of possible posts for this meeting, her idea turned broader, into growing awareness of the BCC first, outlining the chief role of the BCC to protect wetlands and then segueing into how the BCC protects water and the fundamental importance of water to the health of our landscape and its inhabitants.

Lindsay suggested to look at posting about World Wetlands Day. UN website has info. It was on Feb 2nd 2023.

Veronica mentioned that there will be a presentation at Bretzfelders in August by Brian Smith from BES about critters that live in the water. He may kick off a “bio blitz”, which is an exercise in identifying plant and animal species in a designated area over a specific time frame, from 24 hours to several weeks in duration. Participants use a free app called “iNaturalist” via which species can be identified and recorded. The BCC can help promote this event and initiative and vice versa.

Veronica confirmed that the BCC can repost content from an organization like Water Stories.

Veronica mentioned that Planning Board is looking for Alternates and putting up a poster around election day before April.

**Regarding BCC Facebook page admin rights:** We might want to think about how to handle handing over these rights to someone new when Lindsay leaves. Currently Cheryl, Lindsay and Vivian have admin rights.

If BCC members come across anything that can go on Facebook in relation to wetlands and water, please send the information to Vivian.

Vivian will connect with individual BCC members for their individual profiles to include in the BCC introductory posts.

**BCC webpage on the Town website**

Lindsay showed an outline of information she is suggesting to post to the BCC page on the Town website. This includes:

* An outline of what the BCC is responsible for and who it interacts with (Town, NH departments)
* A list of current members and their term dates
* A mention that the BCC is looking for Alternates and a way to reach out to the BCC by email if anyone is interested
* When the BCC usually meets and a link to past meeting agendas and meeting minutes
* A link to follow the BCC on Facebook
* A link to the permit flyer (that was originally compiled by Nicole McGrath) for people to refer to if they have Wetlands Permit questions
* Information on the annual Roadside Clean-Up
* Information about the Adopt a Spot program and a link to the sign-up form
* A link to the BCC’s “Outdoor Recreation in Bethlehem” flyer
* Information about the Tellman-Johnson Town Forest with a link to Town Forest Stewardship Plan

The BCC page have a link on the Town Directory on the website.

Lindsay will send Veronica the document containing the information so that the page can be created and populated with our information.

**Roadside Clean-Up Day – review tasks**

The clean-up will take place on May 6th, 2023.

Lindsay will send BCC members the updated flyer before the next meeting.

Some tasks were already allocated at this meeting:

* Rachelle will connect with BES.
* Margaret or Betsey (if Margaret doesn’t want to) is happy to reach out to White Mountain School.
* Betsey also offered to contact the Woodland Community School.
* Veronica will contact Profile High School and will let all Town officials know about the date.

Other tasks will be reviewed at the March meeting.

**Regarding the ice-cream social:**

There was discussion around providing ice-cream for roadside clean-up volunteers.

Betsey suggested that BCC members look for donors who would give money towards tokens from Super Secret Ice-Cream.

Participant numbers in the past have reached 50. We could cap the amount of tokens given out. Once decided how many tokens we would like to buy, we can reach out to the owner of Super Secret Ice-Cream and start to make arrangements with them.

It was agreed to revisit this suggestion at a future meeting.

**Other/New Business**

**Bretzfelder series is happening**

The event on March 1st is going to be online with an update on The Rocks renovations. The week after, March 8th, is going to be about black bears and also on Zoom. Both events are at 6pm. People need to register online to attend.

Last week, 25 people attended the presentation about common loons.

**Bretzfelder committee BCC rep**

Veronica reminded BCC members that the BCC needs to send a representative to the committee. BCC members are asked to consider volunteering.

**Next BCC meetings**

The next meetings will take place on March 23rd at the Library, April 27th, May 6th for the Roadside Clean-up, and May 25th.

**Cheryl made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:52pm. Seconded by Betsey. Motion unanimously passed.**

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

Respectfully submitted by Vivian Winterhoff, Recording Secretary.