Bethlehem Conservation Committee Minutes

July 18, 2024

Bethlehem Public Library

(Minutes by Chris Jensen)

Attendees: Cheryl Jensen, Joanne Jones (alternate), Rachelle Lyons, Chris Jensen (alternate).

Guests: John and Mary Polaski.

The meeting began at 5:07 p.m.

Since several members were unable to attend, Ms. Jensen appointed Ms. Jones and Mr. Jensen as voting members.

**Public Comment**: There was no public comment.

**Minutes:** Ms. Jensen made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Jones seconded the motion, which unanimously passed.

**Treasurer’s Report**: There was no report since Margaret Gale was not able to attend.

**Updating the Natural Resources Inventory**: Ms. Lyons said Elise Lawson would begin visiting sites soon, but was waiting for permission from one landowner.

**Update Eversource X-178 and U-99; the Seep and Granite State Landfill**: Ms. Jensen said a decision from NH DES on Eversource’s project was expected on July 23rd. She said she was not aware of anything new on the Seep. She noted NH DES has asked Casella for a considerable amount of additional information.

**Possible Ordinances:** Ms. Lyons said she has reviewed some town ordinances including aquifer protection, but that does not cover withdrawals. She said that is a vulnerability that the commission might want to address. It was agreed any ordinances would need to be coordinated with the planning and select boards. One possibility was meeting with the planning board and letting them know the conservation commission will be looking at some changes to better protect the environment. Ms. Lyons said she will follow up. Mr. Jensen also said the conservation commission might want to consult with Tara Bamford, a professional planner who has worked with the planning board.

**Legislative Update:** Ms. Jensen noted a new state law that allows conservation commissions to be either appointed by the select board or elected. In order to change membership to elected status, the town would have to approve it in March.

**iNaturalist:** The commission reviewed the proposed notice to seek help from residents for The Natural Resources Inventory and made some tweaks. There was also a discussion about ways to spread the word.

**Friends:** There was a discussion about getting help with research or other tasks from interested residents who might not have the time to be a full-time member or an alternate. Given all the environmental issues and the workload, commission members agreed that would be helpful.

Mr. Jensen made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Ms. Lyons and unanimously approved.

The meeting ended at 5:43 p.m.