



APPROVED MINUTES
Ridgefield Conservation Commission
Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street
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June 1, 2020

A meeting of the Ridgefield Conservation Commission was held via teleconference on Monday, June 1, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Carroll Brewster Jim Coyle Dave Cronin Jack Kace
 Erik Keller Daniel C. Levine Jean Linville Matt Sharp
 Kitsey Snow Allan Welby

Absent: Eric Beckenstein

Beth Peyser, Michael Schneider, Phil Kearns, Joseph Issac (and his father, David) and Sophie Desmarais also attended via teleconference.

Mr. Coyle chaired the meeting. Ms. Lake took the minutes.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May 18, 2020 meeting were reviewed.

UPON motion duly made (Cronin), seconded (Keller), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of May 18, 2020 be approved and ordered filed in the Town Hall.

2. OPEN SPACE

Eagle Scout Projects

Joseph Issac – Joseph proposed enhancing the nature walk he experienced as a student while attending Ridgebury Elementary School. He plans to create and post several signs identifying points of interests on the horseshoe-shaped trail close to school building. The approximate cost to the RCC will be \$250. The RCC was pleased to support the project with the following requests.

- 1) The RCC will approve the content and style of all signs before printing.
- 2) The RCC asks that the poison ivy be removed at the trail entrance.
- 3) The RCC would like the sign near the pond to focus on phragmites.
- 4) The RCC suggests the post depth be reduced to 2 feet deep from 4 feet deep.

UPON motion duly made (Cronin), seconded (Kace), and unanimously carried, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Ridgebury Elementary School Interactive Trail project, with the requests listed above, and the \$250 material costs.

Sophie Desmarais – Sophie proposed to build a bridge with handrail over a rock stream in MarJoy Pond to make the pond and waterfall more accessible. She will also add a sign at the trail entrance, and do general trail maintenance and blazing along the way. She plans to start in late June and should finish in one weekend.

UPON motion duly made (Cronin), seconded (Kace), and unanimously carried, it was RESOLVED to approve the MarJoy Pond bridge project as discussed and the material costs of approximately \$700.

ATVs at Pine Mountain – Mr. Coyle discussed the ATV issue with Mr. Marconi who suggested having another discussion with the Police Chief and getting additional pictures of the damage done in the open space. Mr. Coyle will contact Mr. Cioffoletti for approval to add rock barriers to prevent access at the entrance to his Ives Court property.

Bikes in Hemlock Hills/Pine Mountain – Ms. Snow, Mr. Cronin and Mr. Sharp met with Mike Malwitz to review the illegal trails. FC NEMBA will remove some of the illegal trails and blaze new ones. There will be a Special Meeting on Wednesday, June 3 at 4pm to walk the site. Commissioners should meet at the North Shore Drive entrance.

McKeon Tree Removal – A dangerous tree is hanging over the entrance to the parking area at McKeon. An estimate of \$1700 was given for removal. Ms. Lake will contact the tree warden about removing the tree.

Tree Planting – Ms. Snow and Mr. Cronin are removing the invasives from the McKeon Pollinator Garden while waiting for the design plan from the landscape designer. The RCC will pay for the trees/shrubs from the Old Sib Fund.

Miscellaneous

Mr. Coyle contacted Will Haskell about helping with acquisition of DOT state-owned property for open space in Ridgefield. He agreed to help with the project.

There is nothing new on the purchase of the Boy Scout property on Pine Mountain. Mr. Sharp will follow up.

At the request of Vic DiMassi and the NRVt, the Commission agreed to have the summer workers spend a day with the brush hogs clearing the entrance to the River Study Area. The summer workers will help with the clearing when the new brush hog is received.

3. ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

Dumping

- Revere Drive –
 - #2 Revere Drive has removed the debris – NOPV remedied.
 - #1 Revere Drive received a quote of \$1700 to pull out the cut trees and place back on the violator's property. The owner agreed at the meeting to remove the tree debris. The homeowner will confirm timing with Ms. Peyser but hopes to finish the work by the end of June.

- Doubleday/Casey Lane – The homeowner is cooperative and working toward remedy.
- Turtle Ridge – Ms. Snow would like to post open space signs to inform neighbors of open space boundaries. She will meet with the summer workers to oversee placement of the signs.

Structures

- Knapp/Leibowitz – Mr. Sharp found a “shelter” on the trail. The summer workers will disassemble the structure.
- Conant Road – In progress. The property owner admitted his children were building a structure in open space. He has been cooperative and will remove the structure and restore the site.
- Old Trolley – A plywood and 2x4 structure is being constructed but it is hard to pinpoint who is responsible. There are nine properties abutting the area. Ms. Peyser will send a letter to the nine property owners asking for information and to inform that the structure will be removed if no one claims ownership. A sign to that effect will be placed on the structure.
- Casey Lane – Mr. Cronin found the beginnings of a structure on the trail. The summer workers will disassemble the structure.
- Pine Mtn. Meditation Hut – The commission discussed the three options provided by the subcommittee.

Option A - leave the structure and trail as is.

Option B - remove the wood portion of the structure, but leave the trail and rocks in place

Option C - remove the entire structure, trail and rocks.

A straw poll was taken.

Option A – Yea - Five members (Cronin, Levine, Linville, Snow, Welby)

Option B – Nay- Four members (Brewster, Coyle, Kace, Keller)

Option C – None.

The commission debated further and a question was called to halt debate and a roll call vote was taken on Option A.

Yea - Four members (Linville, Levine, Snow, Welby),

Nay - Four members (Brewster, Coyle, Kace, Keller)

One abstention (Cronin)

The roll call vote to approve Option A does not carry.

Ms. Peyser will check with Mr. Baldelli about building and zoning codes.

Mr. Coyle will check with Atty. Grogins about the ordinance change.

The discussion will continue.

4. DEEP OSWA GRANT APPLICATION – Work continues on the application due July 1st.

5. MEETINGS FOR ATTENDANCE

P&Z May 26 – Cronin
Jun 2 – Kace (canceled)
Jun 9 – Keller
Jun 23 – Levine

IWB May 28 – Levine
Jun 11 – Linville
Jun 25 – Sharp

6. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

STEAM Backpacks – Jean continues working on the backpacks. Anyone with suggestions please contact her.

Where in the Woods? – The contest has begun and has received good press promotion.

8. NEW BUSINESS – None.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION (Property Acquisition) – None.

10. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Garden of Ideas is prepared to sell their parcel. Bear Mountain appraisal review is complete. The recommendation to purchase both properties will be discussed at the June 10th BOS meeting.

UPON motion duly made (Cronin), seconded (Keller) and carried, it was RESOLVED to approve the purchase of the Garden of Ideas/Craigmoor one-acre parcel for \$10,000, plus soft costs, and purchase the Bear Mountain 14-acre parcel for \$140,000, plus soft costs.

ADJOURNMENT

UPON motion duly made (Brewster), seconded (Welby), and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35pm.

Respectfully submitted by,
Colleen Lake

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.