

Stratham Conservation Commission

4/10/19

Public Session

Present: Bill McCarthy, Bob Keating, Dan McAuliffe, Pat Elwell, Bill Kenny, Allison Knab

Also present: Seth Hickey and David Moore

New Business

Electric Bike Discussion

Tom Phoenix 7 Lovell Rd, came to ask a question of the CC. He has an electric bike and wanted to use it on a trail. Someone there told him they were on the "Trail Commission" and that there would be a \$200 fine for using the trail with an electric bike or horses. There is no such Trail Commission. Bill M explained how some parts of the trails are privately owned so it potentially could have been a land owner. Seth stated that when ordinances were written against motorized vehicles, ebikes had not been invented or considered. Bill M asked if the intent of the ordinance was to control: noise, fumes, speed? No one on the CC nor Seth felt that the ebikes would most likely be thought of as going against the ordinance. Apparently, there was some lively discussion about this issue/incident on social media. It seemed clear however that the person identifying himself as being on the "Trail Commission" was misrepresenting himself. Seth and Bill M and David Moore will meet, include other stakeholders as necessary, to discuss any changes that may need to be made to guidelines.

Barker Easement Language

David presented the easement language for the Barker Easement. This language relates to the back portion of the property where the trails are located. There is language on the easement language that specifically states "non-motorized" bikes. Description of agriculture and forestry is the same as ALE easement. There is some question as to whether or not use of snowmobiles would be allowed. Pat asked if electric bikes were not allowed, would that also limit access to motorized wheelchairs. SELT weighed in on removal of non-motorized bike trails. They feel opening this could potentially pose more damage to trails. The CC questioned how much more damage they would do that ordinary bikes. There are different kinds of electric bikes. Seth noted that the technology is evolving and so with a document that is in perpetuity this may be difficult to define and close a door that cannot be opened again. Dan noted that the language in the Barker easement is specific about non-motorized bicycles" vs, non-motorized "vehicles." The CC discussed forestry issues, particularly since trails are through this portion of the property. David will have a conversation about the town being notified when such things occur so that the town make certain that trails users are safe. Bill suggested that there be a "definition" section at the beginning of the document (such as "notification," "motorized bike," etc.) Since the CC just received this document, if any CC rep has comments about the document they should forward them to Bill M by this weekend and he will in turn send them on to David by Monday.

Minutes

Dan moved, Bill K seconded approval of the March 13, 2019 public minutes with the change of adding Allison's name to the list of those in attendance. Motion passed

Bob moved, Dan seconded approval of the March 13, 2019 non-public minutes with no changes and to seal the minutes. Motion passed.

Mail

No Mail

Conservation Commission Appointments

Terms for Tim Copeland, Brad Jones, Bill Kenny expire this year.

Pat moved, Allison seconded reappointing all the above to another three years. Motion passed.

Bill M is willing to continue Chair, Pat is willing to continue as Vice Chair, Ana Egana was appointed as Secretary, with Pat and Allison assisting as needed.

Allison moved all the above appointments, Bob seconded. Motion passed.

Old Business

Planning Board & Municipal Updates

None

Town Clean-up Day preparation update

Bill spoke with David M and the highway dept. will collect bags on the day of the event. Pat has created a Facebook event. Seth will help with poster distribution and display at the park. Tavis will provide a large version of the town map for the CC to use.

Beaver Activity in SHP/Town Forest

Bill K looked at the damage to the trees. He did not feel that at the moment the tree damage would be affecting users of the park/forest. He has been unable to reach the game warden yet to discuss further. The CC is still in investigation mode.

Master Plan update

The Master Plan committee will be holding a public forum on Monday, May 13, 6:30 - 8:30 pm. There will be an opening presentation followed by an open house to answer questions about how the plan is proceeding.

SHP Trail Network

Maintenance scheduled for 2nd week of May.

Half Log Bridge on the Barker Property had rotted to the point that it was no longer stable and needed to be replaced.

Dan moved, Bill K seconded going into non public for discussion of land easement acquisition. Motion passed. 8:37 pm.

Dan moved, Allison Seconded, closing the non-public session and sealing the minutes. 8:51 pm. Motion approved.

Allison moved, Bill K seconded close of meeting. Motion passed.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24, 7:00pm at the Stratham Municipal Center.

Respectfully submitted, Pat Elwell