



Mason Conservation Commission Minutes

April 13, 2011
7:00 pm to 10:40 pm

In Attendance

- Bob Dillberger
- Bob Larochele
- Barbara Devore
- Liz Fletcher
- Rob Doyle
- Ann Moser
- Anna Faiello

Voted unanimously to accept March minutes.

Rob Doyle proposed the idea of approaching the Selectmen about permanently committing the Lucy Lawrence lot (L-36) for conservation. Additionally, he proposed actively managing it to prevent reforestation and maintaining it as a meadow or field. The idea is consistent with the widely recognized need to preserve fields for wildlife, including pollinating insects. We agreed that it's an idea worth pursuing, especially as part of our management plan. In the mean time, we might want to discuss mowing to prevent reforestation until details are worked out.

Met with Jenny Snyder from PSNH to discuss an easement that would allow PSNH to cross over the RR trail. She's reviewing various access points and found the original license from B&M RR expired when Mason acquired the land, so they need to create a new agreement (specifically, an easement) with the town. They currently need permission to cross to upgrade their transmission technology (new wiring, but no new poles), and want an easement to establish this arrangement permanently. We agreed that such an arrangement is acceptable for a one-time fee (amount to be determined) to be paid by PSNH. PSNH will cover surveying and easement prep. The relevant area is 170 ft. (width of the current PSNH ROW) times the width of the RR trail bed which is roughly 80 ft. Bob L. and Liz mentioned that A-11 is also probably involved, being acquired as part of the RR bed purchase. We need to confirm this. Jenny will look into their records and get back to us with a complete plan. To help, Bob L. will send Jenny digital copies of the relevant VAL sheets.

Thanks to Devan Fletcher, with help from Joe MacGuire, for repositioning the Spaulding Brook bridge. But the bridge still needs anchor cables installed. Devan suggested we talk to Mark Caldron to see if the scouts can do the work, given that the bridge was built as a scout project. Liz volunteered to call Mark to discuss.

Discussed possible acquisition of fee ownership or easement on the land offered last month by Mr. Anderson. We will pursue funding through the USDA Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), but outright purchase seems unlikely at this time. Liz will follow up with WRP to get clarification on their requirements and options.

Barbara presented a proposal from Mike Bromberg to develop a high quality trail map for Mason, to be sold for profit. We agreed it's worth further discussion (particularly as a potential fund-raiser), and would like to invite him to our May meeting.

Discussed again the possibility of using prison labor for some town projects. Possible projects are detailed in earlier minutes: Jackson Rd. bridge planking, trail maintenance on Potter lands, walkway at Cliff Hastings nature trail. Need to inspect the Jackson Rd. bridge to figure out what's needed. Agreed to meet there Sunday 4/17 at 10:30 for a look-see.

Discussed lease agreement and potential rent increase on Old Ashby Rd. property (the A-frame). We need to consider going market rate and offset that by the value of work Dennis does. It seems an increase is warranted, but how much? Proposed a \$50 increase (12.5 %).

Received quarterly rent check for \$1200 from Dennis Graham.

Discussed posting easement documents on Web site so they're available for public inspection (and readily available to us). The idea was motivated by a notice of intent to cut on the Fifield easement along Spaulding Brook. The easement restricts cutting Black and Spaulding Brooks. To ensure the easement conditions are met, we'll ask Craig Fifield to have their forester mark the trees they intend to cut, and then we'll ask Bill Downs to inspect the area to ensure the marked trees don't exceed the allowed basal area.

Liz proposed we rent a 4-yard dumpster (est. \$60) to collect the results of the annual roadside clean-up. Somebody suggested we contact Shaw's to see if they can offer a better price. Also need to clarify to what location the dumpster should be delivered (highway dept. garage or sand pit?).

Discussed and agreed to order a copy of "Good Forestry" for \$25 from Good Forestry in the Granite State. Bob D. will order a copy for the Commission.

On March 18th the Commission sponsored the Eyes on Owls Program from Dunstable, MA, for Mason School children in grades 1-5; several senior citizens also attended. The evening program attracted about 60 townspeople. The live owls were happy to return home for a late dinner of mice after a busy day in Mason.

On April 7th the Salamander Migration program with Rick Glatz from Manchester was attended by about 20 very enthusiastic people from age 6 to 76. Extra handouts were donated to the Mason Library. Programs are financed through donations, not tax dollars.