



Mason Conservation Commission Minutes – D R A F T

Oct. 12, 2011
7:00 pm to 10:00 pm

In Attendance

- Bob Dillberger
- Bob Larochelle
- Barbara Devore
- Anna Faello
- Liz Fletcher

Voted unanimously to accept Sept. minutes with revisions.

Met with Al Williams, Curt Guild, & Shawn Dogherty representing Winter Wanderers to discuss Jackson Rd. RR bridge repair. Town engineer (Dennis Labombard) recommends painting steel I-beams, but doing so seems impractical. Issue was raised of the likelihood of lead paint being in play. For the concrete slab plan, posts must be moved out to be 9 inches from outer edge to leave a 10-foot wide passage. Or reduce diameter of up-rights to 3-4 inches if we keep the current layout.

Reviewed our options: (1) concrete slab, (2) wooden construction, or (3) concrete "ties" that look like wood but aren't. Further discussion spurred by Barbara led to the conclusion that given the lateness of the year we're better off waiting until next spring. Also, Curt mentioned that to avoid surprises (or deal with them), we really should remove the current decking first, then measure. With the concrete slab approach, that means a month during which the bridge is unusable (while the slabs cure). Conclusion: lay down plywood to cover holes and punky areas for this winter season (Winter Wanderers will take care of this and let Bob L. know), then do the final repair next spring. Gives us time to investigate the option of concrete ties.

Got a beaver deceiver from the highway department (removed from an area where the beavers have left). It's currently being stored in the sand pit, ours for the taking (according to Barbara). Barbara will talk to Fred G. about the cost of having them install it at Cliff Hastings preserve (Merriam Hill Rd.) Fallback plan: hire Bill Downs to install (Barbara said he installed it originally).

Update on CC programs from Barbara: Oct. 22 program on wooden spoons (and we hope a performance on the musical shotgun). Nov. 30 program on mountain lions. Coming up in spring: bouncing signals off the moon and meteors, plus stargazing.

Update on inmates work program: program has been cut in half. We can't get any more free labor this year.

Re. invasive plant control, Barbara contacted several licensed herbicide applicators. Only one responded, saying it's too late for this year (frost will soon destroy above-ground growth). Barbara also mentioned a outbreak of knotweed on Old Ashby Rd. She contacted a local resident who will help with control.

Barbara proposed taking advantage of the federal drug take-back project to help protect groundwater from chemical contaminants introduced when prescription drugs are flushed down domestic drains. The program would be jointly sponsored by the Mason PD and CC. DEA will provide materials (Barry H. will coordinate) and will take place sometime in spring 2012.

Liz presented a list of the conservation easements that will need monitoring in Nov and Dec after the leaves come off when it's easier to see the survey markers. Bob L and Bob D agreed to monitor Fifield's. Anna walked the south and western boundaries of the Stewart easement this summer, she found a well-designed trail had been made by the Grovesteins, the present owners. Liz will ask Ann Moser if she can help with the d'Arbeloff easements on Darling Hill Road. Ann is so skilled at finding survey markers.

Received check from Dennis Graham for \$1,350.00 for rent on A-frame at Old Ashby Rd. To be deposited in the 135 Old Ashby Rd. account.

No bills to pay this month.

Barbara raised the question of proposing legislation to limit water extraction for commercial purposes as preemptive protection against water bottling companies. By state law, regulations must be in place before any such operation starts. After the state issues a permit, the operation is beyond town control.

Agreed to meet at the Potter Homestead, Greenville Rd. on Sat. Oct. 15 at 10 a.m. to clean up broken glass left over from hangar demolition, and possibly install the cable gate.