**Bethlehem Conservation Commission (BCC)**

**November 17th 2022**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Location:** on Zoom and in person at Town Library

**Committee members present:** Lindsay Webb, Margaret Gale, Vivian Winterhoff, Ivan Ash, Veronica Morris

**In attendance:** Joan Karpf, Rachelle Lyons (on Zoom), Barry Zitser (on Zoom)

Lindsay called the meeting to order at 06:05pm.

**Public comment**

**BES field trip proposal**

Barry spoke with Bethlehem Elementary School (BES) about an education recycling tour. The grant they were considering to fund the tour has a minimum budget of $250,000, so is not appropriate for the BES.

The North East Resource Recovery Association (NRRA) may apply for this grant, so we may benefit from it through them. However, if an application were successful expenditure of funds would not happen until October 2023 at the earliest.

Would the BCC support funding 60 BES students (4th to 6th grade) going on a tour of the Gilford transfer station? The reason Gilford transfer station is being proposed is that it is a state-of-the-art facility. Maybe some free guest speaker from the NRRA would also be able to give a talk during the tour or trip.

The bus would cost about $900.

Sue Greenlaw (BES principal), Bryan Smith (science education teacher) and NRRA are very enthusiastic about this tour.

Barry is very happy to help organize the event. Rachelle mentioned that there might be an opportunity to stop at Plymouth State University for a place to eat and use bathrooms, if necessary and there is time.

Lindsay will reach out to Sue and Bryan at BES, copying in Barry, to inquire whether BES would be interested in continuing the organization of the trip with the BCC’s support. Our budget for a BES field trip is $500.

**Mail received**

**Presidential Mountain Resort (PMR)**

A shoreland permit was issued.

**Email received from Bethlehem resident: Littleton property potentially starting gravel pit operation**

Access to the property in question is via Gun Club Road in Bethlehem and Bethlehem residents are abutters to the property. The owner of the property, Chris Crowe, has applied to the Littleton Planning Board for a Special Exception to allow commercial removal of loam, clay, sand, gravel and ledges at 173 Alder Brook Road, map 48, lot 5, which is a rural zone.

The Planning Board hearing happened after the email was received by the BCC; the applicant withdrew his application.

Lindsay wanted to bring this to BCC members’ awareness. This falls within Littleton’s jurisdiction for now.

**Minutes**

**Lindsay made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on October 20th 2022. Margaret seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Treasurer’s report**

Town account balance: $985.02

Savings account balance: $15,137.81

No deposits or withdrawal from either account since last meeting.

**Margaret moved that she, the BCC Treasuer, direct the Town Treasurer, Frank Claffey, to transfer the balance of the BCC Town Appropriation Account to the BCC Woodsville Guarantee Bank Savings account. Lindsay seconded this motion. The motion was passed unanimously.**

**Report from the NHACC Conference**

Margaret attended 3 workshops (at her own cost):

* One on invasive plants. She brought back a booklet on best management practices for knotweed.
* Another workshop on cyanobacteria – potentially relevant to only Forest Lake at present.
* Another workshop about native bees and pollinators in NH.

**Proposed 2023 budget**

**Vivian made a motion to approve the proposed 2023 budget, totaling $1,120, with agreed minor changes to some wording and to approve it for submission to the Select Board. Margaret seconded. Motion unanimously passed.**

**Draft warrant article to change Town Forest name**

Lindsay presented a draft warrant article. Margaret and Cheryl had also drafted one. Using the two drafts, BCC Members redrafted the article to the following:

*Shall the town rename the Bethlehem Town Forest, located on Prospect Street, to the Tellman-Johnson Town Forest? (majority vote required) Tax impact: $0*

*This warrant article is proposed by the Bethlehem Conservation Commission to honor the pioneering efforts of Tanya Tellman and Marilyn Johnson. They were founding members of the Conservation Commission and advocated to establish the Town Forest. The Town Forest was established at the 1998 Town Meeting and is managed by the Bethlehem Conservation Commission.*

**Lindsay made a motion to submit the warrant article as worded above to the Select Board. Margaret seconded. Motion unanimously approved.**

**Town Forest stewardship plan**

Margaret would like BCC members to continue to work on implementing the plan.

**Other/New Business**

**Emerald Ash Borer in Bethlehem**

Rachelle talked about how towns in NH are exploring how to be proactive about a future increase in dead trees as a result of the Emerald Ash Borer’s unfortunate spread and the cost and taking the trees down.

There may also be potential preventive measures for “special interest” trees.

This is something to keep on the BCC’s radar.

**Proposed collaboration between local conservation commissions**

Joan Karpf of the Carroll Conservation Commission is keen to coordinate educational efforts between the local conservation commissions (CCs). We could have guest speakers come up to talk and to guide activities, e.g. identifying native plants, to educate our communities jointly.

She has ideas as to how social groups could be formed around the activities, such as reserving a small part of a property for native plant species, which could entice residents to start their own projects, and encourage members to join conservation commissions.

She asked what topics might be of interest to Bethlehem residents. Repurposing materials was mentioned as one potential topic. There are already a few groups that organize talks and activities, including Bretzfelders, and there is the Town vegetable garden group, which have been successful at engaging residents from local communities.

**Next BCC meetings**

The next meetings will take place on December 22nd . If nothing urgent comes up it will be canceled. After that, the next meeting will be on January 26th 2023.

**Vivian made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7.42pm. Seconded by Lindsay. Motion unanimously passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:42pm.**

Respectfully submitted by Vivian Winterhoff.