

LAND STEWARDSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE

Town Hall Council Chambers

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

3:35 PM

MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Ellen Snyder, Dennis Meadows, Mike Lynch, Kenny Rotner

AGENDA: Added discussion of LSC meeting day and time

JAPANESE KNOTWEED PROJECT

One year ago, we began mapping invasive Japanese knotweed populations throughout town and began a pilot treatment program near Town Hall and Mill Pond, with Doug Cygan, State Invasive Species Coordinator. This winter, the Sandy Brook Drive neighborhood contacted Mike Lynch about a collaborative effort to control knotweed in their neighborhood using the smothering method. This requires layers of wood chips and plastic placed over cut stems and maintained for 5 years. Following several meetings, Mike and Ellen drafted a proposal where DPW will provide wood chips and the plastic and the neighborhood association will do the rest of the work. Mike said this is a great collaboration. Kenny added that this is great activism by a neighborhood group.

GARLIC MUSTARD CHALLENGE

Ellen described the effort to control this invasive herbaceous plant that comes up in April and May and is easy to pull. The Garlic Mustard Challenge is a regional collaborative effort that is coordinated through Nature Groupie (UNH). Locally, Ellen has been partnering with this effort and raising awareness about the plant. Individuals or groups can pull this plant and report the number of garbage bags that they have pulled on the Nature Groupie website. Dennis asked what happens if you don't pull it. Ellen stated that the plant invades forest edges and can outcompete native plants. Kenny asked if garlic mustard is found on any town lands. Ellen reported that the Middle School has pulled the plant on the hillside along Coe Drive and it is also on the abutting Stolworthy Wildlife Sanctuary. Kenny said it would be a great collaboration if the Middle School could incorporate into their programs, including cooking by making garlic mustard pesto.

MERRICK BRIDGE PROJECT UPDATE

Ellen reported that \$1,425 in private donations has been raised in private donations for the Merrick bridge, including about 6 donations from Riverwoods. Ellen offered to do a trail walk with Riverwoods residents. Dennis has a contact there, but has not heard back yet. Mike suggested that crossing Route 108 with a group might require a cruiser to safely cross. He noted that the Riverwoods residents are an active group.

LONGMARSH BRIDGE PROJECT

Ellen spoke to the Durham Rotary recently that included a discussion of the Longmarsh bog bridge. Mike noted that the Rotary has helped repair the bridge for the past 10-12 years repairing the rough cut pine boards as needed. Ellen said she is assessing this 350-400 foot bog bridge for a new design that would be more sustainable and lift it higher above the wetland, which is sometimes inundated with water by beaver activity. She shared the example of the Great Bay Discovery Center boardwalk which was recently re-built using helical piers. This is the technique recommended by NH DES as it has minimal

impact on the wetland. Helical piers are large screws that are screwed into the ground on top of which a bridge is built. A discussion of whether this should be an “accessible” bridge determined that the site is difficult to access so not best location for such. Dennis suggested it might be helpful identify specific sites in town where accessible trails are suitable and desirable. Kenny asked if permitting will be required. Yes. Ellen will discuss with Mark West and DES about options. The Town did get a permit when the current bog bridge was built.

2020 EVENTS AND WORK DAYS

Ellen mentioned the two events scheduled for March: stargazing and walk from Town Landing to Milne Nature Sanctuary.

OTHER UPDATES

Doe Farm: Ellen reported on a volunteer collaboration with two UNH Thompson School forestry students. The students contacted Ellen to assist with a project as part of community service required for their leadership class. Ellen worked with them on clearing underbrush and downed trees in the woods between the cellar hole and the burial ground at Doe Farm. The students are very skilled, safety conscious, trained in chain saw use, and brought tools from Thompson School. They spent four hours and plan to return for 8 more hours. Ellen is pleased that this work is getting done. Kenny asked if we should recognize the students at a Town Council meeting, which shows respect and appreciation.

Kenny: Andrea Bodo has stepped down from the Heritage Commission; Larry Brickner-Wood will take her place on the LSC. Kenny said it would be helpful if LSC members could send a replacement if they are not able to attend a LSC meeting.

Oyster River Bridge: Dennis reported that he is touring the bridge site with the State Trails Program. HEB Engineers has been selected as the engineering firm to design the bridge. They are working on a scope of work. HEB comes highly recommended. Dennis has asked HEB to consider the Milne bridge crossing as well.

MIKE LYNCH UPDATE

Mike has been spending a lot of time with the wrap-up of the Seacoast Reliability project, which is about 78% done. Eversource plans to finish by end of May, followed by a summer of landscaping. Mike wrote a letter to the PUC asking for assistance with the issue of utility line poles. Throughout Town there are sites where two poles remain. A new pole is installed, Eversource and cable move their lines, but it takes the telephone company 2-5 years to move their lines, so the old pole remains. At Wagon Hill Farm, we are moving into Phase 2 this year, which includes extending the Living Shoreline west and additional boardwalk and fencing. There are some funds remaining to assist with the planning of this next phase.

LSC MEETING DAY AND TIME

Kenny presented the results of his survey to LSC members on preferred meeting day and time. The consensus is to move the meeting to the Second Thursday of the month at 8:15 AM.

Meeting adjourned at 4:17 PM

Next Meeting: April 9, 2020, 8:15 AM

Submitted by Ellen Snyder