

Land Stewardship Subcommittee Meeting Minutes for March 10, 2022

Attendance: John Carroll, Larry Brickner-Wood, Ann Welsh, Sally Needell, Sally Tobias, Mike Everngam (til 9:30), Gale Carey, Vin Dellova (arriving 8:50). Also attending were Rich Reine, Tom Brightman, and Todd Selig. Absent: John Nachilly and Mike Drooker

1. The meeting was called to order by AnnWelsh at 8:03.

2. The Meeting Agenda was unanimously approved.

3. December meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Spruce Hole Bog (SHB) Student Research-Alix Contosta

- Sensors placed at SHB will be self-contained allowing for better distribution throughout the area.
- Sensors will include time-lapse cameras, data loggers for temperature, audio recorders, and soil moisture probes.
- Bird song and other noises will be recorded for 2 hours at dawn daily.
- Data will be used to understand changing sub-arctic conditions. (Durham will have access to the data.)
- Data collection may be long term.
- Students are developing signs to explain their research that will be posted at SHB. Signage should be run by Tom Brightman and Todd Selig and should include UNH and Town of Durham logos. In addition, explanations should be included in Friday Updates.
- The DPW has wetlands monitoring data for SHB to share with the project.
- SBH land is town-owned.
- Durham has not had issues with scientific monitors being disturbed or stolen. Wildlife may cause more problems.
- Local bird watchers may be of help in identifying calls recorded.
- Students are working in small groups, and only a few students will visit the bog each time to reduce the chances of creating herd paths.
- Mike Evergam made a motion to approve the project. It was unanimously approved.

5. Stewarding Our Lands Update-Gale Carey

- The Stewarding Our Lands Working Group (SOL) plans to take on 4 sites each year-giving 3 months to collect questionnaire data at each site.
- The Stevens Woods questionnaire is in progress.
- Trail counters will be up at Stevens Woods in mid-March.
- Questionnaires will be distributed online and in person.
- QR codes will be developed for each site to collect additional data and/or share information with the public.

6. Property Updates-Tom Brightman

- Eagle Scout bridge project at WHF. The Conservation Commission has approved up to \$1100 in spending and the DPW will provide granite curbing slabs and gravel for the project.
- Fogg I Easement sale: Tom will make sure that the details in the Conservation Easement are understood by a future buyer.

- Fogg II Easement land has a new owner. Tom is following up with the new owners about how they may use the easement land.
Tom Brightman should use his best judgment to direct new owners to the allowed uses-including contacting the Conservation Commission.
- **Doug Tallamy presentation recap and next steps**
 - Resources for purchasing plants/seeds
 - Student involvement
 - Work with UNH Cooperative Extension and Master Gardeners
 - Publicity with DPW annual tree-planting ceremony and the Durham Shade Tree Program
 - Promote removal of invasive plants
 - Improve invasive clearings in ROWs with herbicide and mechanical methods-and work with adjacent land owners.
 - Additional help from Doug Cyan regarding invasive species removal
 - Promoting Best Practices by Town (and ORCSD) examples: Leaving leaves on the ground in the fall, avoiding/reducing use of night lighting, avoiding chemical use, planting native plants.
 - Initiate a new committee to promote native plants. Vin Dellova, Sally Tobias, John Carroll, and Ann Welsh volunteered to join this committee.
- Additional suggestions:
 - Should the DPW continue to collect leaves in the fall?
 - Change the culture around maintaining mowed lawns
 - Reduce town mowing-reduce grass use with shrubs; use perennials
 - Remove the Burning Bush plants at the High School
 - Leaf contest like the dandelion contest?
 - Share the Tallamy presentation with school students -Gale Carey will contact schools
 - Ann Welsh will contact the Conservation Commission
 - The Tallamy video should be edited to remove other Conservation Commission business.
 - Arbor Day is April 29 and there is an interest in more town participation

7. Update on the Pike Property

The Town of Durham has completed its part of purchasing the property. Updates will come from SELT.

8. HDC LCHIP Project-Larry Brickner-Wood

A committee is developing plans for the Chelsey-Bickford house to be completed in May so that an LCHIP grant may be pursued for the actual renovation.

9. Plowing at town conservation lands' parking lots

Plowing of parking lots was discussed-including the challenges of the plowing and the demands on the assigned trucks during storms. Rich Reine plans to talk with the drivers about the parking lots at their end-of-the season review.

10. Reports from Committees

- Agriculture-focus on 3-town farmers' relationship. They are asking Emery Farm if they may have a farmers' market for farmers from Lee, Madbury, and Durham.

- Parks and Rec-there is a newly-hired assistant to support the extensive P&R programming.
- Town Council-Anton Bekkerman gave a presentation on the UNH Moore Fields. Todd Selig was authorized to execute the Purchase and Sales Agreement for the Pike Property. The last meeting primarily involved public comments regarding the future of the Mill Pond Dam.

The next step in the dam removal process involves the planning, permitting, historic concerns, and grant funding cycles and will take 12-18 months. Actual removal of the dam will take place in 18-36 months. A letter will go out to impoundment abutters letting them know the potential timing.

- HDC-Indigenous leaders spoke to the committee. The committee is working to update the historic information at kiosks. And expanding their focus to include the landscapes.

11. The Meeting was adjourned at 10:26 AM.

The Next Meeting is on Wednesday, April 14th at 8:30 AM.