

Bolton Conservation Commission

March 28, 2016

Bolton Town Office

Members present: Lars Botzjorn, ^(Chair) Ali Kosiba, Steve McLeod, Jerry Mullen, Amy Ludwin

Members absent: Virginia Haviland.

Guests: Rob and Bonnie Mullen, Leslie Pelch, and Willa Pelch- Schoen.

The meeting came to order at 6:05 p.m.

1. Review of the minutes of the February 1 meeting: approved as written.

2. Public comments:

ATV sighted by Rob Mullen at the PPCA, seen on several section of the trails, muddy day, torn up trails in some areas. Adults, drove by a no ATV sign. How do we address that issue? Education? Signs, Talk face to face, or conversation on the phone. Can we outreach to who that was, figure that out? A part of the role of role of the PPCA steward? To be discussed later in the meeting. Discussed VTF&W are the enforcement for this topic. Most effective ATV enforcement is via local club, but we don't have one. Forward the video to Amy G. for the SB review, so if anyone can ID the ATV person, then could someone have a neighborly conversation in a friendly way to ask them to stay off the PPCA trails. Gene Armstrong was mentioned as a local VAST rep. who could contact ATV'ers.

3. Preston Pond Conservation Area.

3a. Review revised draft forest and wildlife habitat management plan

Overall PPCA Plan to discuss- Stand 5 most recently changed section. Proposed 2-3 acre cuts, near the edge of the PPCA (and other openings) while preserving the interior character of much of the PPCA, by Keith Thompson. Old logging trails in that area, a priority to fix? Discussed: saw timber— Saw timber is/ will be clearly subservient to the wildlife, and habitat goals of the plan. Keith has said if we get the machines in there it's likely to be a wash in terms of \$. Pros of forest cutting, for wildlife, habitat. Suggestion was made to allow individuals to cut trees for personal use if access were someday possible? But that seems difficult given the setting. Discussion of allowing limited forest harvesting, practice small scale cuts instead of large scale. Jerry moved to approve the forest management plan, as a part of the overall forest management plan, Ali seconds. All approve.

Review overall plan draft: (Sec. 7) role of steward/steward group, (Sec. 5.3) trapping criteria.

Section 7 - Stewards group- page 26. 7.1 Point person, and primary contact. Designated by the CC. The issue of ATV's would be addressed by the Steward. Idea posed, but dismissed to combine with Town Constable, perhaps to be left as individual roles, so someone could apply to do both, or one. Lars has created a job description, and will forward that to the whole CC. The role could be filled by more than one person; as in being co-stewards but that might be more complicated. The current Stewards Group, on FB, is now an adhoc , informal group- the Steward could be the " chair", the point person, of that group. The CC committee will approve, The Steward they will have to also be approved/appointed by the SB. [We decided not to have a committee approved by the SB - delete section 7.3 - and just have the Steward be appointed to oversee volunteer work (the Stewards group would remain ad hoc - in part to help maintain numbers (without the burden of being 'official'). Ali is interested to be the current PPCA Steward. Motion made by Jerry to nominates Ali for Steward, , 2nd by:.....vote passes to recommend her appointment, move to recommend her to the SB. Discussed any activity that would involve possible insurance or liability issues would need to be cleared by the SB. A question for the SB in general, for anyone who is doing trail work or tree cutting out there. What is the procedure for that, legal limitations of that? The CC will give the Steward, the dates and clear agenda, schedule based on the plan of the PPCA timeline. Hiking trails included. Reference to that timeline is now a now last page in the PPCA plan. Sub question: Could we do a trails work day? Ali has led trail work groups before, with forms that volunteers signed. Could that be organized? How would that occur, would the SB like to have a say in that? With liability forms signed? Would Ali organized it? With another organization? VYCC, Ali will follow up on that? National Trails Day ? GMC? - Lars will follow up with GMC. Mindset of being careful with that. Lars will pass that on the the SB. Primitive biathlon idea from Jerry, will check with Ray to see what they did in Cambridge and report back to the CC on that.

Trapping Issue: possible proposed criteria to discuss. Tabled to future meeting. Lars has drafted a summary from our last meeting. Lars will email that to the group this week, individual feedback should be given back to Lars on that, then discuss the whole topic at the next meeting. Lars will update the draft on those before the next meeting.

Invited guest: Rob Mullen Community petition , online, that Rob and Bonnie Mullen had set up, and gathered signatures to only allow trapping at PPCA for conservation purposes, not as a recreational activity. Rob presented it to our BCC for our review, discussion. For several reasons, Rob will e mail it to all of us BCC members, and give it to Lars, to give to Amy G, ask Amy Gover to share with the SB. Discussed should we get someone from F&W to do a field review of the area for us? Chris B.? Kim R.? Lars reported on feedback from Chris

Bernier of VTDF&W: to expedite the annual field review, other department biologists could be asked to do it. Also, the 'carrying capacity' of any predator species would need to be estimated on a larger scale than the PPCA. Perhaps besides Beaver, carrying capacity, give us an assessment. We all need to read that petition and then be prepared to discuss in full next meeting. Ali brought up: NHPR, something wild program, NH, biologist, giving a bigger perspective that was summarized. In short there are: Unexpected side effects at times of certain actions, how do we assess impacts? This is not always as clear as someone might first think. Changes in hunting, much lower numbers of hunters now in Bolton. In summary the petition from Rob and Bonnie Mullen is to: Advise the CC, to stipulate in the draft management plan that trapping be only done when certain conditions are met. To be covered at next meeting.

Conflict of interest: re; dual relationships. Brought to the BCC re: Steve M.'s role as Exec. Dir. of the VT Traditions Coalition and the trapping issue. Steve reviews what his legislative work is. Vt. Trappers assoc. donated in 2002, said his business is "certainly a pro trapping association". We discussed ; what are the boundaries, difference with having a lot of expertise vs. conflict of interest. Some ideas on that... how to balance that out over time? Lars while "A policy advantage could be created with an association with a group." Lars, thinks that might not apply, if the BCC group is diverse. Other perspectives on that, question about Steve's connections with other trapping groups. Summary of info from the VLCT info on conflicts of interest, handouts given for individual and group review. Lars wants to defer to the member to make the decision. Plan: better to inform ourselves to make informed discussion at the next meeting about conflict of interest re: Steve's role in the trapping discussion. We'll all read the handouts. Steve gave a summary of his work, and who's interests he's connected with. He did reach out to Vermont trappers Assoc. concerning the recent PPCA trapping discussions.

Public comment process: SB review, public meetings

. Lars suggested that once the BCC review is complete, the SB can decide if the draft plan needs further public comment.

3d. Final trail map (Leslie Pelch) Leslie Pelch, invited guest. Shares presentation about the labels, overlap fixed, think she has everything we've talked about so far. QR code is on it. Has made an online version of this, so it will be a live map that you can interact with on the Town Web site. It looks good! Nice junction markers, where signs are now. Incorporating signs on her map. Clear Key . Talked about having contour maps posted at the trail heads and at a few junctions, and a 'you are here' sign; added to existing posts. Leslie will email us all a copy of the map for our review. Anyone who has feedback, misspelling, or other wording, symbols images, please get back to her asap. A copy of the map will be in the final plan for PPCA. Old

long trail not on it, by choice. Trying to keep is simple, and just the trails that are a part of the PPCA. The map will be great, because it can be easy to get lost in that area! Thank-you Leslie Pelch !

4 .Winooski River Floodplain Forest Inventory: The Town has about \$2,500 that could be requested. Talk to Arrowwood about smaller inventory to meet lesser budget. Amy and will pursue, with Arrowwood, and the SB request for the funds, approved.

5. Election of Officers: Motion to elect Amy Chair, 2nd, voted to be so. No vice chair at the moment, or secretary chosen, minutes will continue to be taken on a rotating basis and posted by a member of the group for now.

6. Wheeler Field update. Next step, Lexie and others are meeting re: act 250 and the parcel of land. More news soon. (Steve M. is now in favor of the project, and the 1/4 cent fund as it pertains to Wheeler field happen if the details make sense.)

7.New Business:

FOW surface runoff workshop in May, at Smilie School, yes we want to support it. Jerry will be Ann from FOW contact for that.

Not going to apply for that tree planting grant as the only feedback from the SB was re: a private property that doesn't meet the grant criteria.

Conservation Commissions within the Winooski Basin meeting this week. Ali, Amy, Virginia planning to attend.

Vermont Coverts educational events upcoming. Discussed.

7a.Green up Day. Tony B. has that plan in hand; he is organizing that day, and events, and on top of it.

Possible meeting frequency of meetings to discuss. Amy authorized by the group to call an extra meeting if needed in April, or monthly until he moves to finish the PPCA, and the related Trapping issues.

8. Next meeting agenda items:

PPCA- Complete draft done, and the trapping criteria done.

ATV follow up

CLF act 64 presentation; future date?

FOW May event - Jerry

PPCA - public comment process, SB review process

PPCA Trail map feedback review

PPCA - Steward : Ali approved by CC, need to be requested approval by SB

PPCA- Stewards role description review

Designated liaisons with partner organizations

Arrow wood Inventory and possible Town Funds for that

Wheeler Field Update

Conflict of Interest update/ discussion

PPCA petition follow up ; are we going to incorporate that into the plan? or not? or some of it?

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Lars Botzjorns, Chair

and Amy Ludwin

for the Conservation Commission

These minutes were read and approved by the Bolton Conservation Commission on:


April 18, 2016



Lars Botzjorns, Chair, For the Commission

