

# Topsham Conservation Commission

Minutes Approved 05/11/21

April 13, 2021 at 5:30 pm

Remote Meeting on Zoom

In attendance: Shana Stewart Deeds, Victor Langelo, Rod Melanson, Steve Pelletier, Raija Suomela

I. Approval of March 9, 2021 minutes.

Victor made a motion to approve minutes as written, Raija seconded, all approved.

II. Additional info from Philippon Dr paper street visit?

Steve, Matt and Raija walked out there to review it, there is a lot of local recreational use. The end of the road is private property, there is not great access to the public property. Depending on what the paper street is, there may be a possibility for entry off of Foreside Road (not great parking) or from the Pleasant Point side (a bit far from the public lands). Since people are using it, it may be nice to formalize something that local property owners agree with for access. This public, IFW land could be a community asset if access can be arranged.

After review of this paper street TCC recommends that the Town review our legal interest in this street. If we have a legal interest, this provides the best access to IFW land beyond for high value recreation. We give it a ranking of 3 on our spreadsheet.

**Shana made a motion to turn our paper street spreadsheet with TCC ranking and suggestions over to Mark Waltz once the above info is added. Raija seconded. This motion passed unanimously.**

III. Review of TSWF walk. Next steps.

Raija, Victor, Rod and Andrew went out and walked a bit at TSWAF with Ed. Ed showed the regrowth in the cleared areas near the log yard (that had the pump track in it now). Ed's preference is to manage for as natural a wooded area as possible.

What is Pam's perspective on recreation there? **Steve will walk with Ed and Pam.**

This is a multi-use property, and folks should be educated that it's also a managed forest. There is currently a forest management plan that needs to be updated. Currently ponds are stocked, and ice fishing is now allowed. The NEMBA trails are established and well used. With increased use, the lack of facilities will need to be discussed. **Steve will coordinate w/ Ed, Pam and provide draft SWF Forest Mgmt Addendum for TCC review by July 1.**

An update (addendum) to the forest management plan should:

1) update the past harvest process (including harvest objectives, \$, volume/app removed, net revenue gained), 2) be more precise about recreation & wildlife goals/objectives (per Pam/ Ed's input), 3) include a review of current silvicultural objectives relative to #2 above, and 4) update invasive species management.

Initial thoughts on goals include a light, selective harvest as long out as possible (15 years) to allow for regeneration.

Management that promotes wildlife use of songbirds, etc. ME Audubon is working with HS students to put up 40 bird houses.

Identification and protection of wetlands.

Maintaining trails with minimal impact.

Monitoring invasive species, and a plan for their removal should they establish.

**We recommend that the Town pays a forester to assess and write a plan for the two West Merrel Road Parcels.**

IV. Somerset to Coots Lane easement.

Victor checked with Craig Stuart at the water district. They have a utility easement. The landowner can't build or obstruct or prevent the water district from accessing it, but they didn't secure any pedestrian ROW. TCC will chat with the new neighbor/homebuyer to see what can be worked out for pedestrian use. **TCC will revisit when we know the LO.** The Town hasn't updated records for the new homebuyers yet.

V. Natural Areas Plan review (time did not permit). **TCC should read the NA plan and add examples to the google drive. We can add notes there as well.**

VI. Updates.

Do we need to revisit any VPs? This was discussed. Steve will let us know in case he is visiting VPs and we can join him. Anyone wishing to assess VPs will let the group know.

VII. Upcoming agenda items.

A. Natural Areas Plan update

B. Funds usage policy.

Motion was made by Raija and seconded by Steve to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 7:10pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary, Shana Stewart Deeds.