Freeport Conservation Commission

Date: 7/12/2022

Time: 6:30pm

Venue: Freeport Community Services

Attendance: Ben Shepard, Ryan Burke, Margaret Gerber, Matt McLaughlin, Catherine Carroll, Carrie Kenne, Derek Lovitch, John Lowe, Mason Morfit, John Schwanda, Sally Walsh

Absent: Anna Cudmore

1. Approve minutes from June meeting
	1. Matt McLaughlin made motion to approve
	2. Ryan Burke seconded the motion
	3. Motion approved unanimously
2. Town Council Workshop – Hedgehog/Mountain bike Public Forum follow up
	1. Public comments from the 6/14/2022 joint meeting between the Conservation Commission and the Town Council were discussed
	2. John Stroud made motion to add to these minutes the emails sent to the Commission since the 6/14/2022 meeting with comments about the Hedgehog Mountain bike proposal
		1. Ben Shepard made a second
		2. Motion approved unanimously
	3. Discussion around evaluating New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) proposal concurrently with updating the Hedgehog Mountain Management Plan
		1. Carrie Keene talked to the Royal River Conservation Trust in Yarmouth
			1. Discussed regional planning for mountain bike trails
	4. John Lowe provided feedback that he has a relative that builds mountain bike trails
		1. It would be nice if some of these trails were accessible to those with less mobility
	5. Sally Walsh is on the Complete Street Committee and has been involved with the Downtown Vision work
		1. Has been looking at connecting various trails and conservation properties around Town
		2. Big issue with silos in Town with these types of discussions being held by various groups
		3. Sally Walsh recommended to share our minutes with Town Committee chairs and Adam Bliss (Town Engineer)
			1. Ben Shepard agreed, and he can share draft minuets via email to other Town Committee Chairs
		4. Margaret Gerber wants more research done into cost to maintain proposed trail network at Hedgehog
		5. Discussed confirming permitting needs for NEMBA proposal
		6. Carrie Kenne has asked one of the Conservation Trust members who works for a land trust in Gorham on maintenance needs on the NEMBA trails in Gorham
			1. Carrie Kenne to follow up on this
		7. Derek Lovitch sits on the Pineland-Bradbury Corridor Steering Committee
			1. Was also on Friends of Bradbury Mountain
			2. Mountain bikes at Bradbury Mountain
				1. Has seen that the mountain bike trails have mostly been maintained by the State, not NEMBA

Freeport Bird Supply volunteers to maintain one of the mountain bike trails

There was a Volunteer Maintenance program, but it’s not popular

* + - * 1. Encourages the Conservation Commission to discuss the NEMBA proposal at Hedgehog with the Bradbury Park Manager
			1. Has done research at Hedgehog about birds breeding
				1. States that development of cross country eliminated two species of birds breeding at Hedgehog

Magnolia warbler

Canada warbler

* + - * 1. Also believes recent clearing work at Hedgehog has impacted bird breeding
			1. Believes invasive species will take hold at Hedgehog if mountain bike trails are built
			2. Margaret Gerber continuing to work on the new Management Plan
				1. Recommended to request from NEMBA and Maine Trail Builders input on annual maintenance costs

Ryan Burke to follow up with Dan Piltch

Margaret Gerber to follow up with Maine Trail Builders

1. Trail disability rating discussion
	1. John Lowe provided feedback that better information needs to be shared with the public on trail accessibility
		1. Also wants more trails in Freeport fixed up for people with less mobility
	2. Ben Shepard showed John Lowe the pamphlets done so far for the Freeport Conservation Commission properties that have trail difficulty ratings as seen below:



* + 1. The only property that doesn’t have pamphlets is Hedgehog
			1. A pamphlet was done for the Hedgehog Cross Country trails and was sent to the Town to update the Freeport Outdoors website, but this hasn’t been done yet
			2. Hedgehog Mountain
	1. Carrie Kenne will discuss this topic with the Freeport Conservation Trust (FCT) Board
1. Florida Lake – John Schwanda
	1. John Schwanda lives directly adjacent to Florida Lake
	2. Looking to have some of his property put into a conservation easement
		1. This would include the snowmobile trail, down the middle of the property
			1. Between a stream that runs into Florida Lake and Baker Road
			2. Eventually from Autumn Lane, a few house lots may be developed to the west of the stream
				1. About 20 acres
			3. Approximate size of the easement would be 30-40 acres
		2. Does the Town or the FCT accept a conservation easements?
			1. The Conservation Commission has not accepted a conservation easement in the past, but the FCT has done this regularly
		3. John Schwanda has allowed public access on the property for some time
			1. There is a snowmobile trail there today
			2. The property has been logged and John Schwanda wishes to still manage the forest on the property, including the proposed easement
		4. John Schwanda has owned the property since 1985
			1. The property is 82 acres
		5. The sentiment of the Conservation Commission is that the Town doesn’t typically accept conservation easements and the FCT is the more appropriate party to accept an easement
			1. Carrie Kenne to connect with John Schwanda
2. Hedgehog sign update
	1. A high school student has been chosen as the sign design winner
3. Quarry Woods trail day?
	1. Two bridges have collapsed off Lower Mast Landing Road
	2. Another bridge as collapsed near the Quarry Ridge Apartments
	3. A mystery person as roughed in a trail to the quarry
	4. A trail workday will be done on Saturday, August 27
4. Adjourn
	1. John Stroud made motion to adjourn
	2. Ryan Burke seconded the motion
	3. Motion approved unanimously
5. Miscellaneous
	1. Florida Lake
		1. Ben Shepard replaced a critical orange trail bridge that was falling apart
		2. Had wood chips dropped off by Public Works
			1. Public Works also took away old decayed bridge materials to the Transfer Station
		3. Need new maps printed by Planning Department for the new Baker Road kiosk
			1. Ben has sent a request to Caroline Pelletier a few times
		4. Ben Shepard is aware of a new beaver dam, but is monitoring
			1. A user attempted to remove the dam, but it was rebuilt
		5. Derek Lovitch has a concern about a user at Florida Lake that walks at least 10 dogs at Florida Lake
			1. It has been intrusive to other users, and to birds
			2. Ben Shepard was bit bad by a runaway dog at Florida Lake while the was working there in June
				1. Ben Shepard to gather feedback from the Friends of Florida Lake Facebook page about possible rulemaking about dogs at Florida Lake

Next meeting: August 27, 2022 at Quarry Woods