

**Thornton Conservation Commission  
Monthly Meeting  
Tuesday, May 10, 2022 - 3:00 p.m. at  
Robin's Nest Park**

**Minutes**

Present: Mike Boisvert, Katri Gurney, Al Lewis, Myrtle Lewis [arrived at 4:33PM], Maryellen Sakura, Jerry Sobolewski

Guests: Alan Hanscom, NH Department of Transportation [DOT]; Dave and Betty Aylward, abutters to Robin's Nest Park; Russ Merrick, nearby neighbor

Katri Gurney called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM. We introduced ourselves to our guests.

**1. Robin's Nest Site Visit.** Committee members met with Alan Hanscom, Dave Aylward, Betty Aylward and Russ Merrick to discuss possible improvements:

- Weekends during the summer are very busy with buses, cars, parking congestion, trash not picked up and lack of a toilet among the issues discussed. Hundreds of people are using Robin's Nest daily from Memorial Day to mid-September. Buses from outfitters and campgrounds [i.e., Pemi River Campground] are a major problem particularly since part of the road is narrow so two buses cannot pass each other. Committee will look into drafting a letter to send to outfitters and campgrounds highlighting 'rules of conduct' when accessing Robin's Nest.
- Dave Aylward, abutter, complained about the number of visitors driving past his house, leaving trash behind, using the land as a toilet and parking congestion. He suggested providing a new access point/road from the intersection of Route 3 and Cross Road across the railroad tracks to the left of the telephone poles leading down to the existing road. A new graded road to the existing DOT road is possible and would require permission of the Department of Transportation Railroad Division. Alan will draft a design of this new graded road for consideration.
- A narrow section of the DOT road to access Robin's Nest Park makes it difficult for cars, particularly buses to pass through. Visitors are using this narrow section of road for overflow parking making matters worse. The committee examined this section of road for potential improvements. This section of road belongs to DOT. Temporary 'No Parking' signs are not posted here by Thornton Police Department since it belongs to DOT. Committee will look into obtaining DOT approval to give the Thornton Police Department permission to extend the temporary 'No Parking' signs into this corridor. Committee and/or Thornton Police Department would probably need the approval of the Board of Selectmen to make any 'No Parking' signs permanent.
- Posted signage at Robin's Nest Park would help address misuse of this area along with the "No Parking" signs. Signage could display 'Rules of Conduct.' Aluminum signs could be custom made. Maryellen Sakura will draft 'Rules of Conduct' for the sign. Another option is for anyone wishing to park here pay for a seasonal parking sticker at the Town Hall that would be displayed on their car to help pay for maintenance of the area.
- Improving the drainage under the bridge would be the responsibility of the DOT but would only be feasible if the committee improves the boat launch.
- It was noted that the hole at the turnaround is a major erosion concern. DOT indicated they will fill the hole in with stuff and top it off with gravel within 30 days. They will also look at other parts of the turnaround and fix as time allows. This would not need a Wetlands Permit.
- Alan Hanscom said that a Wetlands Permit would be needed to improve parking and recommended including any boat launch improvements at the same time. That way only one permit would be needed and once approved is good for five years. A formalized Engineering Plan would be best to ensure the permit is approved at once rather than having to continually resubmit the application for approval. Jerry Sobolewski mentioned Joe Pinzola as a local engineer who could potentially work on the project. There is existing parking for eight vehicles and potentially another eight spots on the other side of the bridge that the DOT owns if the committee decides not to install a new access point/road from the intersection of Route 3 and Cross Road. Alan mentioned that despite the boulders blocking the Wildlife Protection Area trail, DOT owns a few

feet of the land behind those boulders so additional parking could be installed to the right of those boulders by cutting the trees and grading the land.

- The committee reviewed the boat launch area. Tiered steps leading into the river is the best approach and using the submerged rocks that slid into the river from the original installation might be the most economical and eco-friendly approach. The committee would need to decide which rocks should be left there for a pad and which ones relocated on the slope. Garrick from Fish & Game has experience with creating/installing boat launches and Alan Hanscom would be willing to attend a meeting with us and Garrick for further discussion.
- The committee discussed what could be purchased this year within our budget. Items discussed included 'rules of conduct' signage, porta potties, neon vests to wear for monitors, and note cards to place on vehicle windshields if we find any vehicles improperly parked.
- The committee discussed members volunteering for a couple of hours on weekends to monitor traffic, address issues and if necessary call the police department to intervene. Katri Gurney volunteered for a couple of hours on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend with other members interested for other times that weekend. Discussion for peak times to monitor appear to be around 10AM for put-in and 2PM for takeout. There may be other organization who would be interested with monitoring; a local Boy Scout troop came into mind as part of their community service initiative.
- The committee will update the Board of Selectmen at their next meeting on the Robin's Nest Park project. This will include reviewing the DOT Memorandum of Understanding for BOD approval and signature. Myrtle Lewis will draft a presentation.

**2. USFS Tree Planting at the Meadows Report.** In March, the prospect of applying for the watershed grants through the MRWC and NFS was introduced to the neighborhood association at the Meadows. The Association jointly owns a parcel of land that abuts both the Pemi River and Willow Brook. The frontage at the Pemi is treeless (removed by the developer for the view). It usually loses from 2-3' a year to erosion. John Roberge and Maryellen Sakura met with Tyson Morrill who is the council's restoration project manager so he could assess eligibility. He determined the Meadows was eligible. The project was brought to a vote and the Meadows Homeowner's Association rejected the proposal. The Thornton Conservation Committee thanked Maryellen Sakura for her efforts and at least she educated the homeowner's there is a no cost option should the erosion issues worsen significantly.

**3. Thornton Night-Out Report.** Jerry Sobolewski shared a photo of the small chain saw carved bear contributed by Cameron Bixby for the commission to raffle. Jerry suggested that the commission buy a larger chain saw carved bear to raffle as well. The commission will review if Board of Selectmen approval is needed to purchase a larger chain saw carved bear. Perhaps Cameron Bixby can provide a binder of photos of his carvings for our table to promote his business. Jerry has pamphlets from the Fish & Game regarding Bear Safety to display on our table. The commission discussed other offerings besides Bear Safety education for our table. Myrtle Lewis has been attending the Thornton Night Out planning meetings and will be assisting with this year's event.

**4. Planning Board Report.** Katri Gurney attended the Planning Board meeting on April 21, 2022. It was unusually long at 3 ½ hours. For committee participation it might be more effective to receive the minutes afterward but the risk is not providing feedback from a conservation perspective regarding any approvals being made at the time.

**5. Thornton Natural Resources Inventory Report [distributed electronically].** Mike Boisvert shared an updated Natural Resources Inventory electronically with the most recent section completed, Surface Geology. Mike will be working on the Forest Resources section next. These are the sections committee members volunteered to work on: #5, Agricultural Lands [Maryellen Sakura], #6, Water Resources [Katri Gurney], #7, Wetland Resources [Mike Boisvert], #8, Wildlife [Myrtle Lewis], #9, Areas of Ecological Significance [Maryellen Sakura], #10, Historic and Cultural Resources [Myrtle Lewis], #11, Conservation Lands [Jerry Sobolewski], #12, Scenic Quality [Jerry Sobolewski]. Any deadlines for the sections are self-imposed by the member volunteering. As untrained novices this task to update can be overwhelming but using the Natural Resources Inventory section in the Thornton Master Plan to start with as well as referring to nearby towns Natural Resource Inventories is helpful [i.e., Campton and Sandwich]. Mike Boisvert can assist with providing Geographic Information System [GIS] maps using NH Granit. He has yet to find the time learn/use the ArcGIS Online.

**6. Thornton Conservation Commission Social/Potluck.** Myrtle and Al Lewis will host a social potluck for committee members at their home on Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup> at 5PM. Further planning will be discussed at next month's meeting.

**7. Minutes.** The minutes of the previous meeting were distributed electronically on April 28, 2022. A motion to accept the minutes of the April 12, 2022 meeting as presented passed unanimously, with 6 members present at the time of the vote.

**8. Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:03 pm. The next Commission meeting will be on Tuesday, June 14 at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Boisvert, Thornton Conservation Member