

**Thornton Conservation Commission
Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, September 13, 2022 - 3:00 p.m. at
Thornton Town Hall**

Minutes

Present: Mike Boisvert, Katri Gurney, Al Lewis, Myrtle Lewis, Jerry Sobolewski
Absent: Maryellen Sakura

Myrtle Lewis called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM.

1. Minutes. The minutes of the previous meeting were distributed electronically on August 11, 2022. A motion to accept the minutes of the August 9, 2022 meeting as presented passed unanimously, with 5 members present at the time of the vote.

2. Robin's Nest Project.

- Katri Gurney indicated she has not received a response from Alan Hanscom, NH Department of Transportation [DOT] to remove the requirement of Thornton having insurance from the Memorandum of Understanding. That said, if Thornton Conservation Committee [TCC] made improvements to Robin's Nest, Thornton may want insurance coverage regardless. At the Board of Selectmen [BOS] meeting in August, it was mentioned to find out the additional cost of insurance. Since we've not heard anything back from the Board of Selectmen [BOS] regarding this matter, perhaps this fell under TCC to follow up. Jerry Sobolewski will consult with Desiree Mahurin, Acting Town Administrator, regarding how to follow up on this matter.
- Mike Boisvert mentioned that he is not optimistic this project will come into fruition given the current state of affairs. Myrtle Lewis replied that she has spoken to a couple of Board of Selectmen privately who encourage TCC to continue their efforts with their feedback in mind. Jerry Sobolewski mentioned that TCC waits for a response and a sketch/plan from Alan Hanscom all of the time so this project continues to drag on after two years. Perhaps it's time to find another person to work with at the DOT, perhaps his supervisor. Myrtle Lewis will reach out to Katri Gurney to determine which DOT personnel TCC could work with other than Allan Hanscom.
- Mike Boisvert shared a draft letter to Thornton's Representatives with the General Congress of New Hampshire informing them of the importance of Robin's Nest as an outdoor recreational resource to not only Thornton but New Hampshire residents as well, and ask if they can create a Robin's Nest Park. A minor wording change was made to the draft. New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions [NHACC] feedback indicated that it's within the jurisdiction of a Conservation Commission to write such letters without approval from the Board of Selectmen. Nonetheless, Mike Boisvert will send a copy to Desiree Mahurin to forward to the Board of Selectmen to make them aware and will send the letter to Thornton's Representatives with the General Congress of New Hampshire a few days later.
- Myrtle Lewis indicated she would be contacting NHACC to determine if TCC could use funds to improve Robin's Nest. Mike Boisvert added there is a workshop at the upcoming NHACC annual meeting regarding putting forth a warrant article to allow Conservation Commissions to spend their money for conservation projects outside their own district and properties they do not own.

3. Thornton Natural Resources Inventory.

- Mike Boisvert has not been able to work on the Forest Resources section this past month and has the Unfragmented Lands section left to do. Katri Gurney provided Mike her updates for the Water Resources section but he has yet to merge it to the master document.

4. TCC Shirts and Hat Options.

- Mike Boisvert shared a number of draft designs electronically to TCC members prior to this meeting. Myrtle Lewis indicated the shirts and hats would be worn for official functions such as site visits, Thornton Night Out, Robin's Nest monitoring, etc. so the bright lime and yellow color is

designed to stand out. Myrtle suggested to have the front of the shirts simply state "TCC" in bold and forego any sort of graphic design. The shirts were made from a performance mesh material and Myrtle asked for a price if they were cotton. Mike Boisvert will work on the changes.

5. Quarterly Photo Contest.

- Discussion ensued over the lack of interest with the Photo Contest from Thornton's Residents. TCC agreed it should be discontinued. Myrtle Lewis will send an email to all TCC members that it will remain publicized in the Town of Thornton's website through the remainder of this year and then be removed at year end if lack of interest continues

6. NHACC Annual Conference, November 5th.

- Myrtle encouraged TCC members to attend if they could with the Town of Thornton paying for it. It will be held in person at the Pembroke Academy that is a very nice facility and a lot of interesting workshops are being offered. Mike Boisvert and Jerry Sobolewski stated they will be attending. Mike Boisvert will send an email to Jerry Sobolewski regarding the workshops he plans to attend so there will not be any overlap. Registrations will be accepted online shortly.

7. Owl's Nest Borrow Pit and Trout Pond

- Myrtle Lewis reminded TCC members about the 4pm site visit at Owl's Head with Chad Stocker to review existing and future projects that may have an environmental impact.

8. Thornton Planning Board Meetings

- Al Lewis volunteered to represent TCC at the Thornton Planning Board meetings.

9. Pemi River Campground

- Al Lewis shared his impressions from the Pemi River Campground site visit with the Thornton Planning Board. The campground plans on adding 30 campsites, 250 feet back from the flood plain that will be in operation from June to October. All 30 sites will have water and electric with 15 sites having septic as well pending approval from DES. There will be a shut off switch for power during flooding events. Thomas Duffield is the engineer. Members from the Campton Conservation Commission were also present.
- Al Lewis spoke with Jerry Warner, Pemi River Campground owner, about Robin's Nest. Jerry stated that he owns the property on 24 Robin's Nest across the street from the abutters to the DOT property. Jerry expressed interest with working with the other Pemi River outfitters using Robin's Nest to pay for a porta pottie. He also was interested with working the other outfitters with fixing the road. Mike Boisvert reminded TCC that improvements cannot be made until the Board of Selectmen signs the DOT Memorandum of Understanding.

9. Other Business

- Myrtle Lewis asked the Board of Selectmen [BOS] with their thoughts about TCC to send letters to landowners who have received a letter from the NH Department of Environmental Services [DES] about offering assistance to respond. BOS felt this approach was inviting too much liability to the Town of Thornton and the best approach was to be more proactive to prevent DES to send letters to begin with.
- Myrtle Lewis spoke with Rosemarie Aurlly from the DES about providing a presentation to landowners along the Pemigewasset River about what they can do to protect the river.
- Myrtle Lewis suggested to send letters to all Pemi River landowners about attending this presentation to the Thornton Town Hall. Mike Boisvert and Jerry Sobolewski expressed a concern about how many Pemi River landowners will actually attend so a handout about what landowners can do should be inserted in the letters for those landowners who cannot attend the presentation.

8. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:47 pm. The next Commission meeting will be on Tuesday, October 11th at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Boisvert, Thornton Conservation Committee Member