

Sharon Conservation Commission
February 27, 2024
Minutes

On February 27, 2024, a regular meeting of the Sharon Conservation Commission was held at the Sharon Meetinghouse on Route 123 in Sharon, New Hampshire at 6:30 p.m. In attendance were Anne Fischer, Anne Booth, Beth Fernald, and Belinda Backstrom.

Minutes

Accepted the January 24, 2024 minutes with January 24, 2023 corrected to 2024.

Financial

Conservation Commission Fund balances as of 2/29/2024:

Conservation Fund:	Interest	\$109.00	Balance	\$ 138,361.88
Town Forest Fund:	Interest	\$ 80.23	Balance	\$ 101,839.73

We approved the proposed 2024 Conservation Commission Budget in advance of Town Meeting:

New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions	\$	250.00
The Monadnock Conservancy		\$ 75.00
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests		\$ 75.00
New England Forestry Foundation		\$ 80.00
Gridley River Water Testing		-- 0 --
Educational Workshops, Maps, &c.		\$ 350.00

Total proposed 2023 budget: \$ 830.00

Beavers

The beaver diversion fence just upstream of the Mill Road Bridge is still working – both bridge culverts are clear.

Town Forest

There was further discussion of the unsolicited trail marking and cutting that has been done. Per RSA 41:11 the Selectboard can agree to rules for Town-owned land. Anne F., therefore, brought the problem of trail damage to the attention of the Selectboard at their February 6, 2024 meeting. The Board agreed to the Cons Com’s plan to change the relevant Town Forest rules language on the Sharon website and to have new Town Forest signs made. The current 11” x 11”, plastic sign posted at trail entrances reads “*Fires and motorized vehicles strictly prohibited. Violators will be prosecuted pursuant to R.S.A. 41:11 by order of the selectmen.*” We plan to add a prohibition on trail marking and trail cutting, also on trapping, pursuant to RSA 41:11.

February 27, 2024 Minutes

RE: Trapping: Anne B. spoke with Jonathan Cowel of the NH Municipal Association legal department about adding the prohibition on trapping. After doing some investigation, he said he does not know of any law against this. The Selectboard, at their March 5, 2024 meeting, agreed to our adding the Town Forest trapping prohibition after Anne B. informed them of the NHMA decision.

Beth will investigate prosecution related to RSA 41:11.

Anne F. distributed a mock-up of the proposed sign.

The new signs will be placed at the entrance of:

- The Big Tree Trail
- Street Street Trail (2)
- Matthews Trail
- Meadow Brook Trail
- SullivanLoop

Beth suggested that avoiding plastic signs in favor of metal would be a responsible choice. Anne B. will investigate costs, availability for both.

When the rules of the forest are confirmed, along with the relevant RSA[s], we will ask Deb to send an email to the town list stating that the Cons Com's Town Forest trail work is nearly complete and noting the Town Forest rules under the relevant RSA [s].

Trail work

Anne F. reported that Ken Chiquoine has chain-sawed and cleared the downed trees that were blocking the Sullivan Loop Trail.

Other than any new storm-related debris, trail work has been completed on all Town Forest trails, except Meadow Brook from the Sharon Arts Center to Big Tree. Rick Lusky will make new trail signs for us. The signs needed:

- Meadow Brook Trail 2 miles to Rt. 123 (2 of these)
- Meadow Brook Trail 2 miles to Sullivan Loop
- Big Tree Trail 1 mile
- Big Tree Trail 1 mile to Jarmany Hill

Town Forest Walk

On March 22, 2024, Hillsborough County Forester Mike Gagnon will lead a walk on the Sullivan Loop Trail from from 2:00 to 4:30. His talk will include information about forest flora and fauna as well as information about previous Town Forest cuts and successional forest patches.

Intent to Cut

The Selectboard has agreed to provide the Conservation Commission with copies of each Intent to Cut that is filed.

Conservation Easements

We decided not to ask a representative from Monadnock Conservancy to meet with us to discuss the conservation easement process as they (and Harris Center) have already provided us with a great deal of written information on the subject. However, we propose to talk with conservation commissions in other towns, such as Jafrey and Temple, about their CE experience -- how they convinced residents to place CE's on all or part of their land. We still need to draft a CE inquiry letter to some Sharon landowners, including a map showing existing CEs in town. The letter could suggest dedicating the easement in honor of a landowner or other family member as has already been done in Sharon.

Moosewood Ecological LLC.

Nothing new at this time.

Trail Cameras

Nothing new.

Bonsal Property – South Road (Map 7 Lot 8 – 125 acres; Map3 Lot 46 – 46 acres)

Nothing new.

Gridley River Water Testing

Belinda Backstrom has agreed to take this on. She will need information from Selinda Chiquoine. Past reports are filed in the Archives.

**Next regular meeting will be held at the Sharon Meeting House
Route 123 Sharon, New Hampshire at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday 03/26/2024.**