

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM via Zoom by Chairperson Rich Dionne

Members Present: Rich Dionne, Leslie Bowen, Greg Devlin, Mike Scurka, & Cameron Genereux

Members Absent: Mike Lamoureux and Joe Pedro, both excused

Guests: none

1) Approval of the prior meeting's Minutes: Motion was made to accept the June meeting minutes

(Motion by Leslie Bowen; Seconded by Cameron Genereux - passed unanimously)

2) Nipmuc Trail: On August 1st, Rich, Cameron, Joe, and Mike L met at the trail evaluate the southern portion of the property, previously explored in the Fall of 2019, for the purpose of determining the viability of extending the trail in that area. It was decided that parts of the prior loop explored would be too maintenance intensive to keep up due to the dense vegetation in that area. It was decided that during the next walk, we will start at the river kiosk, and locate a trail back to the existing trail via a less vegetative path.

Mr. Jones, property owner of the trailhead right of way, expressed concerns to Rich over numerous vehicles parking directly in front of the Nipmuc trail sign, rather than in the designated parking area across the street. He also noted people are walking past the trail entrance that leads into the woods, and continuing instead through his field. He also raised issue with people not cleaning up after their dogs, resulting in dog feces getting tracked into his garage after mowing the path through the field. Rich will get prices for additional "No Parking" signage, an "Enter Here" sign, and a sign for pet owners to clean up after their dogs.

Rich has not had any more contact with Martha Thuman regarding redesignation of plant locations for the brochure.

Gateway Welcome Sign/ Rt 102: Rich and his wife Jacki have been watering the plants they planted at the sign. Due to the tops being eaten off the plants, Rich purchased and applied repellant.

A motion was made to reimburse Richard Dionne \$32.09 for the repellant.

(Motion made by Mike Scurka; Seconded by Greg Devin - passed unanimously)

Wallum Lake Canoe Launch: Joe P reported to Rich that the lake level is now 585.0, which is very low. Joe also reported that the launch has been very busy. While there has been lots of boaters using the launch, there has also been a lot of people utilizing the launch for swimming, and litter has increased.

Proposed Log Road Solar Project: Rich lead a discussion of the proposed solar project on Log Road, noting that the former gravel bank appears to be a perfect property for this type of development. However, concerns were raised regarding the need for a variance, as this type of development is not permitted as currently zoned (F-5). The question was raised whether granting this variance would require granting variances for future requests for similar uses. Also asked was whether an amendment to the current zoning of solar projects, that addresses this type of property, would be a better route? Or does addressing each project individually, though a variance, provide a more appropriate means to consider the uniqueness of each proposal and property that does not conform to current zoning?

Additionally, while the wildlife & plant corridor only crosses a small portion of the property, Rich noted that the Planning & Zoning Board should be considering the impact of the project as it relates to the Wildlife Action Plan.

Rich will speak with Ray Goff to gain clarity on the questions raised, prior to sending a letter to the Planning & Zoning board with feedback from the commission.

Invoices/Mail: Rich will get any mail for us at the town hall

Other: Cameron noted that a bear was seen in the area of the Sunoco station in Harrisville. A video from a friend showed that there were many people gathering around in close proximity to the bear, which seemed agitated. As more of these type of animal encounters are occurring, the commission discussed ways to inform the public to stay clear of any wildlife, including in the town's Bugle publication and possibly The Bargain Buyer.

Adjournment: 7:58 PM (motion made by Greg Devlin; seconded by Mike Scurka - passed unanimously)