

FAYSTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

May 05, 2020

MINUTES

Attendees via ZOOM: Lisa Koitzsch, Corrie Miller, Geri Procaccini, Ned Kelley, Gene Fialkoff

ACTION ITEMS BEFORE NEXT MEETING

- **Everyone:** Cut down knotweed at the Chase Brook Town Forest parking area, whenever you have time. Place in plastic bag or take to Warren knotweed dump.
- **Lisa:** Send letter to town residents interested in FCC and Stewardship Committee, and Boyce Hill Steering Committee.
- **Corrie:** Submit Tiny Grant proposal for the Boyce Hill forest property.
- **Geri:** Write letter for FPF with a compost update. Come up with fundraising ideas.
- **Ned:** Clean out the cellar hole at Boyce Hill.
- **Gene:** Install posters announcing Green-Up Day around town.
- **Everyone:** Help distribute Green-Up Day bags when they arrive.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Corrie moved to approve the minutes from April 21, 2020, and Ned seconded. No further discussion, all in favor, motion was approved.

FCC MEETINGS

ZOOM TIPS: Corrie gave a brief synopsis of best practices for zoom meetings and will provide login details for regularly scheduled future meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Five to ten minutes will be allotted for public comments at the beginning of every FCC meeting. This will help Commission members have a productive meeting and work through the entire meeting's agenda. It will also allow members of the public to bring new issues to the Commission's attention.

FAYSTON TOWN FORESTS

BOYCE HILL:

1. Lisa and Ky met with abutting landowner Dan Fuller and his partner Brad Belknap to walk their adjoining property line. There is some confusion between two land surveys as to the exact location of the property's boundary. Further investigation will be required. Dan indicated that he does not mind people walking the trail on his land between the Boyce Hill Town Forest and the state-owned Dowsville Headwaters parcel. However, he would prefer that people ask his permission before doing so, and that they respect his sugaring operation and not displace any of the sap lines.
2. The FCC received several letters from neighboring landowners and N. Fayston residents requesting that the Town of Fayston mow/brushhog the property this year, rather than wait until the planning process has determined the long-term management plan. The primary concern was to increase accessibility for backcountry skiing and snowshoeing although one letter suggested that mowing the land would create great wildlife habitat. The Boyce Hill Steering Committee provided input in a response letter from the FCC reps, Lisa and Corrie, that stated that additional mowing, other than just the road to the top, might be considered contingent upon a visit to the site to determine what areas are in absolute need of mowing this year. In addition, the FCC will consult with other land managers to determine how best to move

forward on this issue. Lisa and Corrie will reach out to this group to schedule a visit with representatives early this summer. At the same time, the FCC received an email from the Mad River Backcountry Coalition expressing their interest in the Boyce Hill Town Forest and their willingness to meet with the FCC at some point to introduce their organization.

3. Corrie reminded everyone that the longer-term management plan is a process whereby all community members with an expressed interest in the use of the property (skiing, hiking, biking, horseback-riding, etc) will have an opportunity to weigh in and that it is important that everyone who wants to weigh in has the chance before management decisions are made. Gene suggested we consider how much land we are conserving and for what specific uses; and to take our time with the process and consider the big picture.
4. All discussed the dock that is currently sitting next to the pond and Corrie suggested the Town sell it as a fundraiser for the property. Further discussion is needed once more details are gathered.
5. Ned volunteered to help clear the growth that is choking the cellar hole so that the stone structure can be more visible to the public. Corrie asked that the debris be put to one side rather than thrown into the woods in case there were any invasive plants growing there.
6. Corrie has written a proposal to the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions for a Tiny Grant that is due, with an extension, in a few days for the Boyce Hill Town Forest Natural Resources/Ecological Inventory, to alleviate the pressure on our Town Forest Reserve Fund.

CHASE BROOK

1. Lisa said there are two old woodchip piles next to the parking area that should be removed or spread along the little nature trail. She also encouraged organizing a knotweed removal work party in the next couple of weeks.
2. Even though the trails on Chase Brook are currently closed and there is a sign posted on the kiosk, Lisa and Akhil have both noticed quite a few vehicles in the parking area.
3. Lisa reminded members to learn and use best practices for COVID-19 for all FCC activities.

FCC MEMBERSHIP

Lisa is drafting a letter to Fayston residents who signed up at town meeting expressing interest in serving on the Conservation Commission. Lisa mentioned the challenge of processing and updating multiple email lists. Geri suggested appointing a chair for each committee to be responsible for communications. Corrie suggested using MailChimp as an easier, user-friendly communication tool.

GREEN-UP DAY

1. The date is set for May 30, 2020. Members are encouraged to pick up trash along the roads anytime between now and Green-Up Day as roadside growth will camouflage litter, making it more difficult to find.
2. Gene will pick up posters from Lisa and install them at visible locations around town.
3. Bags need to be distributed at different locations in Fayston a few days prior to Green-up day. All members are requested to help with that and with trash pick-up. Lisa will send an FPF posting reminding community members to participate, and how the process will work as far as finding bags, leaving full bags, and social distancing practices.

COMPOSTING

Geri said the requirement date of 7/1/20 to ban kitchen scraps from trash hasn't yet been postponed but is still under consideration by the state and the date is expected to be extended. She will submit a letter to FPF relaying that message, along with the compost survey results.

OTHER BUSINESS

FUNDRAISING: All talked about various ways to fundraise for the management planning process for Boyce Hill and for future management of the two Town Forests. Geri will try to come up with some fundraising ideas for the next FCC meeting.

EDUCATION: Ned suggested that we access online Naturalist sites for education and information on various topics. Lisa confirmed that she has been watching several informative and interesting presentations. Two local sites with several upcoming presentations are the North Branch Nature Center and the Green Mountain Club.

The next FCC meeting will be held virtually through Zoom June 1, 2020, at 6:00PM.