

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

REMOTE ONLINE MEETING MINUTES Thursday, July 19, 2023 – 7 p.m.

Approved 8-24-2023

Present: Bea Bezmalinovic, Chair; Jay McHale, Vice-Chair; Michael D’Ortenzio and Brandon Schmitt, NRC Director

Guests: Christopher Garris, Oak Street

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7 p.m.

Public Speak

Christopher Garris, 11 Oak Street – thanked the NRC for presenting options on pickleball and looked forward to finding a solution for all.

New & Continuing Business

Trail Committee Appointments: The following candidates were put forward for Trails Committee appointments:

- Denny Nackoney
- Ekaterina Zemlyakova
- Bob Brown
- Diane Hall
- Jen Bonniwell
- Joan Gaughan
- John Schuler
- Laura Robert
- Rick Mongeau
- Steve Park

After a motion was made (Mr. McHale) and seconded (Mr. D’Ortenzio), the board voted 3-0 to approve the full slate of the Trails Committee.

Pickleball Issue

Mr. McHale reviewed the progress being made on a solution for pickleball play in Town. The Recreation Commission has approved a short-term solution that includes: reduced hours at Sprague & Perrin Park, use of one tennis court at Hunnewell and the use of the parking lot adjacent to the basketball courts at Hunnewell.

Longer term solutions being explored include: temporary courts (similar to what was used this summer at Fenway Park), space at Babson College and Morses Pond.

Timing: The goal is to put a solution forward at Special Town Meeting in the fall.

Sisters of Charity

Mr. D'Ortenzio discussed the visit and the section of property on the 125 Oakland Street lot that connects to Centennial Park and its value as forested land abutting existing parkland. The NRC members discussed potential options, and the need to discuss coordination with the Planning Board, Select Board, and the property owner to evaluate and potential Town meeting action, either proposed by the Sisters of Charity or Town organizations.

Permit Request

There were no permit requests for this meeting.

Director's Report

Farm Bill: Mr. Schmitt presented to the commission Dr. Sarah Little's request for the NRC to contact legislators about preemption language in the Farm Bill. The Commissioners were in agreement to support a letter to the legislators and Mr. Schmitt will move forward with drafting the letter.

Morses Pond:

- (1) **New Weed Harvester:** Mr. Schmitt shared photos of the new weed harvester being delivered to the DPW, which is set to start working Thursday. Residents inquired about the naming of the new harvester, and maintenance of the swimming lane. Mr. Schmitt said the plan is to try and keep the swim lane open and it may need another run through to keep it clear.
- (2) **Testing:** Warmer drier weather conditions can produce algae blooms and a sign will be going up at Morses Pond. The Pond Manager will be testing this week and will monitor the algae. Ms. Bezmalinovic requested that the Friends of Morses Pond are informed about the algae blooms.
- (3) **Future Discussion:** Mr. D'Ortenzio suggested future discussions about overall budgeting and management of the pond.

NRC Policy Handbook: Mr. Schmitt reported there is slow progress on the edits for the new NRC Policy Handbook.

Invasive Species: The knotweed barrier restoration will move forward near Grove and the Appleby Bridge.

Squirrel Road: Discussions have begun to determine the work to improve the road noting the road includes both a Town Property and private property section. The funds will be available for this project.

Centennial Follow-Up: Ms. Bezmalinovic suggested another visit to Centennial for the rest of the Commission members who were unable to make the first visit. She would also like to reach out to other boards to see if they would like to attend.

Liaison Reports

CPC: Mr. McHale reported that the CPC will be having a meeting with the Select Board to discuss the North 40 and identifying the portion of the property to be put under a Conservation Restriction (CR).

Wellesley Conservation Land Trust: Mr. D'Ortenzio is going to reach out to get their input on the Sisters of Charity.

Climate Emergency

Ms. Bezmalinovic discussed a Boston Globe article talking about regional dams that in need of repair. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/07/15/science/dams-in-massachusetts/>

Minutes Review

The June 15 minutes were reviewed and corrected.

The June 7 Public Forum minutes were reviewed and corrected.

Mr. McHale made the motion to approve the minutes, seconded (Mr. D’Ortenzio), the board voted 3-0 to approve the minutes for June 15th & June 7 Public Forum minutes - McHale-Yea, D’Ortenzio-Yea, Bezmalinovic-Yea

Meeting Schedule

August:

August 8, 2023: NRC Retreat, part 2: 8-10am

August 24 as a Zoom Meeting; 7pm start

September (7pm start; Kingsbury Room):

Sept 7

Sept 21

October (7pm start; Kingsbury Room):

Oct 5

Oct 19

After a motion was made (Mr. McHale) and seconded (Mr. D’Ortenzio), the board voted 3-0 to on a motion to adjourn. McHale-Yea, Bezmalinovic-Yea, D’Ortenzio-Yea

Adjourn

After a motion (D’Ortenzio) was made and seconded (McHale), the NRC voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

Materials Referenced

Agenda 7-19-2023 (revised)

Pickleball material

[Information on Farm Bill pre-emption language](#)

Draft June 7, and June 15 Minutes

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Collins, Secretary