

STRAFFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

January 25, 2022

ZOOM

Board members in attendance: J.T Horn, James Erbaugh, David Paganelli, Chuck Sherman, Kate Bass, Micki Colbeck, Seve Faccio, Mike Hebb, and Greg McHugo.

- 1) Welcome to James Erbaugh. Teaches in the Environmental Sciences department at Dartmouth.
- 2) Minutes from last meeting should be changed to Kate Bass instead of Root. Minutes approved.
- 3) James Erbaugh volunteered to serve as new chairperson. Voted and unanimously approved. What are our goals? Put on agenda for next meeting.
- 4) Micki has been working on a Flood Mitigation grant with Erik Reimanis at Newton School and Victoria Littlefield at TRORC. Money would be used to plant trees along the west Branch of the Ompomponoosuc in vulnerable spots with high erosion and very few trees. Newton School students and community volunteers would provide the labor.
- 5) Ashley Forest report by Dave Paganelli and JT Horn: The Selectboard accepted the gift and the management structure. The real estate closing is Monday the 31st. How can SCC help in getting Ashley up and running? Pat Kelley suggested we help find people to recommend being on the Ashley management board. JT Horn is writing a job description which will be circulated and posted on the town listserv. There is a forestry management plan in effect, but the two towns will want to have input into a new plan. The public and conservation commissions should have a say about the forest plan. There is some question about where that road really ends at Ashley. A gate would be helpful beyond the parking to deter offroad vehicles from tearing up the trails. Micki added that there is a celebration at the forest on Sunday the 30th to thank everyone who helped with the project.

- 6) Trails report.: Mike Hebb said trails got a lot of use this winter. He and Dave P. have been out at the Cobb Town Forest working on the forest plan there. Fairlee and Thetford Conservation Commissions are planning public walks with experts on nature. Mike thought we should do that as well. James said let's get a list of expertise on our board and set up some walks around our natural areas. Dave offered to lead a walk on forest management plans; Steve on vernal pools; Micki on ferns.
- 7) 4-Towns report: Micki attended a ZOOM meeting with members of the 4-Towns conservation commissions hosted by Megan Asbury, our AmeriCorps volunteer. We shared what each conservation commission is doing and suggested projects to help unite the four towns through trails and forest connectivity. It was suggested that we join the Vermont Association of Conservation Commissions.
- 8) Open Space Plan report: Dave and James volunteered to work on the open space plan. James received a version of it from Stephen Wilbanks; they will update some numbers and some language and add the Ashley Forest.
- 9) Other business: James needs to be added to the google drive. Thank you to Dave Paganelli for running on the selectboard. Thank you to Dave and JT for all their hard work on the Ashley Forest. Discussion about who among us might be interested in the Ashley Forest Board.
- 10) Our next meeting will be February 22, 2022.
- 11) Motion to adjourn; seconded; motion carried.

