

EATON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

March 11, 2024

1. Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Members present were Marnie Cobbs, Dick Fortin, Paul Nuccio, Robin Nuccio, Holly Fortin and Tom Head. Also present were Dagmar von Schwerin, Kristie Foster Carbone and Dennis Sullivan.

2. **ADMINISTRATION** – Minutes of the February 12 meeting were accepted.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

Conservation Fund	\$15,828.48	CD \$10,165.78	
Foss Mountain Fund	\$16,288.77		
Forest Management Fund	\$18,166.79	CD \$30,497.34	
Land Conservation Fund	\$ 9,393.13	CD \$10,165.78	
TOTAL	\$59,677.17	CD \$50,828.90	\$110,506.07
Donation box at trailhead	\$00.00		
Website Donation Income	\$0		

The ECC voted to pay NHACC 2023 dues of \$250 from the Conservation Fund.

Treasurer's report was accepted.

4. **SELECTMEN'S REPORT** – Selectmen discussed retaining proper formality at all Board meetings, with Board members seated at the table and members of the public seated in the room and invited to contribute to discussions when recognized by the Board.

Blue Sky Tower contacted the Selectmen regarding the use of Towle Hill. Since then, Mariner Tower has expressed an interest in looking at Towle Hill site as a possibility. Dick and Greg Grinnell walked the site located on Town land (Boise lot) which has a decent road leading to the top of the hill. This site may be preferable to other sites discussed due to the existing road. A cell tower could also bring steady income for the Town. One cell tower can improve service although not for everyone in the valley, but hopefully for many people who currently lose all connections during power outages when Fidium service goes down. The Board will meet with Mariner to learn more.

Stubby will be repairing a washout on Potter Road. Trees have been tagged on Potter and Foss Mountain Roads by Stubby and the power company for cutting. As they are both Scenic Roads, any cutting plans will have to go through the Planning Board and a public hearing for approval.

5. **PLANNING BOARD** – The PB is discussing the Master Plan in sections, with recreation, natural resources and administration discussed to date. Dennis suggested that a joint meeting of the PB and ECC might be useful to discuss overlapping issues including trails, town land revenue and costs, etc. A jointly developed questionnaire will be crucial to learning what the Town wants to see. Education and context will be important in phrasing questions to get the most useful information. For example, the public may want to have more trails on public land, but they will need to know that there are associated costs and responsibilities for trails including

parking, road and trail maintenance, clean up/trash removal, monitoring and volunteer coordination. The original and ongoing costs of the Foss Mountain trail can be used as an example.

Concern that land in current use generates reduced income needs to be analyzed on a cost to benefit ratio. A UNH study shows that in most cases, the money saved by lowered demand for services outweighed income brought in by development. Much of Eaton's land is also not easily developed as 70% of the land consists of steep or very steep slopes. Background issues such as these need to be understood by townspeople responding to a questionnaire. PB discussed other ways to generate more income from Town land – tapping for maple syrup, community gardens – all not very profitable.

The PB plans to send out the questionnaire this summer. The ECC is planning to submit their input to the master plan by June. A joint PB/ECC meeting could take place in June or earlier to coordinate the development of the questionnaire and final content, although the PB has the final say on content. (*reminder*: It was suggested that we might get help from NHACC to fine tune the questions to avoid leading questions and ensure that the most useful information is gathered)

6. FOSS MANAGEMENT – the trail is in reasonable shape but will need some maintenance. Marnie and Dick will talk to Ryan Bushnell in April about blueberries. Russ and Jenny Lanoie's friend Renee Ciulla, an instructor at UMass School of Agriculture, is interested in picking. Dick will also visit the Amish market to assess interest. Members of ECC were encouraged to work with Ryan and any other pickers this year to better understand the process of picking and distribution of blueberries for sale.

7. TOWN LAND MANAGEMENT – Eaton Master Plan language – see Community Cohort

8. FOREST MANAGEMENT – no issues

9. WATER MANAGEMENT – no issues

10. COMMUNITY COHORT - The next Conservation Conversation on "Invasive Species" will be led by Wendy Scribner, Carroll County Forester, to be held on Thursday, May 30 from 6:30 - 8:00 PM at Eaton Town Hall.

Eaton Master Plan Comments - The group reviewed the Recreation section of the 2015 Master Plan. Marnie took notes of everyone's input and will collate for everyone to review and discuss at the next meeting, along with the Land Use section.

Some possible goals and objectives discussed and slated for more research include: Recreation on town lakes impacts the work of ECC as it contributes to the degradation of water quality and the danger of the introduction of invasive species. Use of the boat launch cannot be restricted to use by Eaton residents, but signage can be posted and it may be possible to require cleaning of motor boats, kayaks, row boats and paddle boards. ECC needs to increase awareness of the NRI as a resource, and provide education opportunities, including leaving literature on Town Hall desks for people to read while they wait. A goal would be to encourage responsible recreation while maintaining and preserving town lands. Recreation options might also change with climate change. If we encourage people to use town lands more, we will need money and people to manage increased use. Recreation can also be about being a citizen scientist, or making art in open spaces. Encouraging use of town lands should be focused on younger

generations who may not have grown up being outside, and who need to feel invested and interested in preserving our natural landscapes and habitats.

11. OTHER BUSINESS –

Kristie Foster Carbone spoke about her discussions with Wendy Scribner who can lead a Conservation Conversation on invasive species in May. She can discuss various methods used to date in Europe and the US on representative species such as knotweed and buckthorn and show attendees some of the invasives in the Town Hall parking lot. It was agreed that the ECC will play the role of Educator for the community only. ECC may tackle specific areas of growth in the future, but the use of any kind of pesticide is not considered a good idea at this time.

Henney Fund Tin Mountain summer camp scholarships – Dagmar will work with Judy to take over the process. The ECC voted to set aside \$1,000 for scholarships and \$1,000 for Paul Nuccio to attend Wetland Certification Training classes.

Next meeting: April 8, 2024 at 6 pm

Meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm

Respectfully submitted by Dagmar von Schwerin, Recording Secretary