

Town of Pownal Conservation Commission (PCC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday June 25 , 2024
6:30 pm, Mallett Hall

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm, the following were in attendance: Matt Welch, Dick Hogue, Bob VanMilligan, Janet Lynch and Wellens King. Amanda Lessard with Royal River Conservation Trust was also in attendance.

The minutes from the May meeting were approved with one grammatical change in paragraph four.

Royal River Conservation Trust (RRCT) Easement: Matt introduced and welcomed Amanda Lessard- the new Conservation Director at RRCT. Amanda will be the liaison with RRCT since Alan Stearn's recent departure from the organization. Amanda was the municipal director in Westbrook, and is also on the town's conservation committee. She was present at the Town Meeting when those in attendance voted to pass the conservation easement on the Elmwood Road woodlot.

Amanda stated that the next step in the process is for the town attorney to finalize the agreement with RRCT. There was some discussion about language surrounding the "donation" of the easement to RRCT. There was a clarification about the fact that there will be no exchange of funds in this agreement. Matt also wanted to clarify that the town does not want additional trail development on the Elmwood Rd lot. Matt asked about whether or not there will be a kiosk at both the trailhead for the Elmwood Rd lot and at the parking area (if it passes at tomorrow night's Planning Board meeting). Amanda did say that a kiosk of some sort will be posted at the trailhead on the town lot at some point. It has been proposed that there will be signage to direct any foot traffic from the proposed parking area to the trailhead. The plan is for the selectboard to sign the warrant at the next meeting.

Some questions were addressed regarding the Conservation Easement document:

- Last sentence of page 3, "existing conditions": there was some question about whether or not materials that have been dumped there in the past will remain and what will happen with gravel piles, etc. It was the PCC's understanding that no additional materials can be dumped, but there is still some question about whether or not the Road Commissioner will be removing any existing materials.
- Amanda reiterated that the purpose of this baseline document is to clarify any future questions.

The next selectboard meeting is on July 8, Amanda is unsure if RRCT and the town attorney will have the easement ready for final approval for that meeting, but she thinks that it should be ready by the selectboard meeting on July 22.

Amanda did mention that trail improvements might be postponed because of other projects that have higher priority for RRCT. Janet reiterated that it might be better to postpone any work as the members of the town want the land to be preserved.

Matt asked the question about what RRCT will do about mountain bikers on the snowfield side of Elmwood with the potential institution of the parking area. Amanda said that signage would be put in place and trail stewards will be helpful. Matt mentioned that the PCC might not meet in July, but he does plan to attend the selectboard meeting on July 22.

Amanda raised the question about further easements on town owned lots. Matt mentioned that the town has voted to assess all of the town properties to comply with a state push for additional affordable housing . Amanda did comment that it is our charge to look into best conservation practices, and offered to act as a resource given her time working for the town of Westbrook and her experience on the conservation board. She mentioned that Westbrook recently passed an ordinance that any sale of town-owned land needs $\frac{2}{3}$ support from WCC, Planning board and Town Council members.

Matt thanked all in attendance, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Wellens King.