

DRAFT

Weston Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes Thursday, August 1, 2019

Attending: Anne Degan, Ann Fujii, Andrew Harper, Donald Hart, Deborah Hennessey, Susan Sommer

Absent: Jeff Lennox

Meeting Called to Order: 7:07 pm

Requested Changes to Agenda: None

Public Comment: None

Lowell Lake Update/Discussion (presentation by Londonderry Conservation Commission)

Irwin Kuperberg, chair of the Londonderry Conservation Commission, gave us an update on the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation plans for overnight lodging in new or existing cabins and expanded parking at Lowell Lake State Park. The 60-day public comment period ends in late September after which time the state will make a final decision. LCC is asking neighboring counterparts, including Weston, to support its official position against overnight lodging and expanded parking at the lake. Despite detailed plans, no environmental impact statement has been conducted, Irwin stated. A May 30 meeting drew more than 100 people, the majority strongly opposed to the plans, he said. A public Open House in July displaying the state's plans for the lake also drew strong opposition from area residents.

Review and Approve Minutes: Ann F. moved and Andrew seconded to approve June 6, 2019 minutes. Unanimously approved (Donald abstaining).

WCC Projects Update

- **Cold Spring Brook Park:** A public groundbreaking ceremony is planned Monday, August 12, 8–9 am, to celebrate the start of work by contractor Wes Ameden to remove the lower dam and reconfigure the stream. The main part of the project is expected to take two-and-a-half weeks. The Task Force will meet Aug. 7 to finalize plans for the event. GNAT hopes to do some before-and-after filming of the project. Ann F. is working on publicity. Ken Hall will be invited to attend. Ken was a driving force behind the project and wrote a comprehensive study of the history and condition of the dams while Chair of the Weston Conservation Commission. A representative from the state will also be invited.

- **Civilian Conservation Corps Trail:** Andrew has had some initial conversations with VTrans and the town road commissioner about parking at the site off Route 155. He is working on putting together an application for a US Forest Service non-commercial Special Use Permit so we can begin trail work. Applications are reviewed in the fall and require detailed documentation. Andrew led Marge Fish of the Green Mountain Club on a hike of the area to scope out what needs to be done to complete the trail. They agreed the work would be minimal because there are only a few wet areas that might require small boardwalks.

- **Wilder Memorial Library:** Deborah suggested three books for library donation – *Nature's Guide to New England*, *Wise Trees* and *The Hidden Life of Trees* – at a total cost of \$70. All three books were reviewed by librarian Randall Szott. Anne D. moved and Ann F. seconded to approve the library books donation. Unanimously approved.

Old and New Business

Review of Conservation Commission Policies and Procedures: Susan moved and Ann F. seconded to adopt the WCC Policies and Procedures as revised. Revisions include an added sentence proposed by Donald regarding gifts of land, in agreement with state statute governing conservation commissions. Unanimously adopted.

Okemo Wildlife Corridor: Andy Tanger of Mount Holly will be invited to attend our September meeting to discuss the neighboring Okemo Wildlife Corridor project.

Lowell Lake State Park: Susan moved and Anne D. seconded to support the LCC statement regarding Lowell Lake State Park. See full statement attached. Motion approved 5–1.

Adjourned: 8:30 pm

Respectfully submitted, Anne Degan

Next meeting: September 5, 2019, 6:30 pm, Weston Town Office

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Weston Conservation Commission Statement on Lowell Lake State Park

After careful consideration, the Weston Conservation Commission supports the recommendations of the Londonderry Conservation Commission regarding Lowell Lake State Park, which state:

“Lowell Lake is one of Vermont’s most valuable natural resources by virtue of its diverse ecosystem, high level of water quality and peaceful atmosphere, which is integral to its value. We support the efforts to date by the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) to manage the lake on behalf of the public. We believe, however, that FPR’s proposals to expand parking and introduce overnight lodging, in existing or newly constructed structures are in direct contradiction to its stated goal of controlling the surge in visitation. We are therefore opposed to these two proposals and ask that FPR:

1- Withdraw any plans for overnight lodging*.

2- Limit the size of planned parking area expansion in order to control access by maintaining or reducing the current number of spots.

* We support the use of existing structures as educational facilities for day users to learn about the ecology and history of the lake area.”