



TOWN OF ESSEX
Conservation Commission

Executive Board

*Kathleen Tucker, Chairman
Jeffrey Lovelace, Vice Chairman
Adrienne Forrest, Secretary*

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Telephone (860) 767-4340 • FAX (860) 767-8509

Regular Members

*Frank Hall
Richard Helmecki
Mark J. Reeves
Jim O'Brien*

Alternate Member

*Roger Field
Jacob Wlochowski*

Unapproved

**Minutes Regular Meeting
Thursday, May 14, 2020 at 7:30pm**

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, May 14, 2020 at 7:30 pm. This meeting was made available to the public via Zoom platform at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82560031695?pwd=Vk4zS0svdzc0MEs5QnNFUWxIL1dSUT09>; Meeting ID: 825 6003 1695

Chairman Kay Tucker welcomed everyone to the first Essex Conservation Commission remote public access meeting which was conducted remotely based on the Governor's suspension of the In Person Open Meeting Requirements. In order to protect those interested in attending such public meetings, the Town of Essex is using an online audio meeting service, a new technology which allows the public to listen and participate in a meeting in real time. This service is new to us and we thank you for your patience as we learn the system.

The Conservation Commission members announced themselves. Attendee was asked to please identify her/himself for the record prior to making any comments.

Attending Members

K Tucker
J Lovelace
F Hall
R Helmecki
M Reeves
J O'Brien
R Field seated for A Forrest

Absent Members

A Forrest
J Wlochowski, Alternate

Staff:

Stella A Caione, Recording Clerk

Audience: Elizabeth Reinhart, Valley Courier

1. Call to Order

K Tucker called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. Seated for the meeting were K Tucker, J Lovelace, F Hall, R Helmecki, M Reeves, J O'Brien, R Field.

2. Public Comment

No public comment

3. Review and Approve March 12, 2020 Meeting Minutes

MOTION made by F Hall to approve the Minutes of the March 12, 2020 meeting with the following correction; 1) Page 2 under Trail reports, Bushy Hill Preserve, second paragraph to read: "*a joist section of the original pedestrian bridge had been placed in the Falls River*"; **SECONDED** by M Reeves; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, F Hall, R Helmecki, M Reeves and J O'Brien; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** J Lovelace, R Field; **Approved:** 5/0/2. No Further Discussion.

4. Old Business to include:

A. Report on new bog bridges

M Reeves stated that in March he assembled previously purchased 4' x 4 and 2' x 3' pieces of lumber into three, 10-foot by 12 in wide bog bridges supported with 4' x 4's in three-foot intervals. M Reeves stated that it makes sense to have these on hand as it is easier to place the bridges in the flooded areas to make passage through the trails possible. M Reeves is currently storing 3 structures until such time as needed.

B. Trail Reports:

1. Bushy Hill Preserve

R Helmecki reported that he is waiting for J Budrow to clarify what will be permitted insofar as the project that involved cleaning around the small man-made pond a short distance from the entrance of Bushy Hill Preserve. The cleanup would involve clearing invasives around the pond then removing deadfall and invasives from the pond. It is anticipated that work within the pond may commence after the water drains and dries, probably in late summer. R Helmecki emailed J Budrow seeking further instruction; Mr. Budrow has not yet responded. R Helmecki will email and follow-up by phone to J Budrow.

R Helmecki reported that he walked Bushy Hill a few weeks ago and there were a good number of people on the trails. R Helmecki reported that there were now two joists placed in the water for the purpose of providing planked access to the opposite side of the Falls River.

R Helmecki stated that he will install the bat houses when the pond clean-up occurs.

2. Canfield Meadow Woods

R Field reported that all of the trails within Canfield Meadow Woods are in very good shape, no trees down. The Essex Land Trust has patrolled all of the trails twice in past 30 days and usage is up 3-fold; this preserve is seeing a good deal of activity. R Field stated that there is very minor trash pick-up and there are no issues to report in regard to dogs. Last Saturday R Field received a report from one of the ELT members that there was garlic mustard in profusion at Book Hill Woods entrance and on Mother's day ELT members met on-site and in less than an hour all of the garlic mustard was cleaned-up.

R Field reported that he spent some time at the orange loop trail today and there is a seasonal marsh area in which Roger improved the stepping-stones within the marshy area. R Field reported that several weeks ago a report was received related to a neighbor on Dennison Road who was upset with people parking partially on her property due to the Dennison Road parking lot being full. A few members of ELT spoke with local police department and a few "No Parking" signs were posted on the neighbor's property. There have been no further complaints since.

3. Viney Hill Brook Preserve

K Tucker reported that the Cedar Meadow has been mowed by the town crew and looks beautiful. The ditch where the four corners intersect is expanding but seems to be flowing. K Tucker suggested that members discuss what to do with the deteriorated bog bridges.

Jeff and Judy Lovelace walked the blue trail in the area of Tucker Pond and J Lovelace noted that the bog bridges were sloppy and could be reinforced. The big red gate was open and the board going into the wildflower meadow was out of place. J Lovelace put the board back in place. J Lovelace stated that the trails were in fairly good shape and appeared to have been recently mowed. The Japanese Knotweed is just beginning to bud again. J Lovelace stated that he noticed beaver activity in the area of the new pond near purple trail.

D. Other

K Tucker reported that the Beaver Celebration walk scheduled for April 18, 2020, along with the April 9, 2020 ECC meeting, was canceled due to the Covid-19 quarantine.

K Tucker stated that she sent a thank you to the Town Crew for their hard work in cutting down the dormant Phragmite patch as required prior to herbicide treatment. Ryan Walsh, Foreman, acknowledged the thank you note.

Discussion followed regarding reconfiguration of the passive parking lot fence to allow access to the Blue Trail as needed. R Field suggested If access is a one-time need, it would not take much effort to pull up one post and move the cross bar so that a vehicle could access the area. If more frequent access is desired, remove one of the horizontals and one of the posts and run a chain and padlock. K Tucker suggested revisiting the fencing modification when installation of the new bog bridges occurs and to obtain a cost for the extension piece of lumber fencing.

R Helmecki received a call from Geoff Furtney, Essex Land Trust, who indicated that he has a kiosk that he would like to install at Bushy Hill Park with the help of R Helmecki. The Essex Conservation

Commission would need to approve the installation. J Lovelace suggested placement of the kiosk in the area near the mailbox that houses the maps. K Tucker noted that on the right side of the trail entrance there is a small lip of stones and suggested that the kiosk be angled in that area on the opposite side of right-of-way of the utility companies. The ELT will donate the Kiosk and because it is a permanent structure on Town property, the placement and approval should come before the ECC before proceeding. R Field suggested that the kiosk be placed down below the parking lot so that in the wintertime snowplows will have a clear swath of driveway for snow clearance.

MOTION made by J Lovelace to authorize R Helmecki to place the kiosk at entrance to Bushy Hill Park in a location that is safe and secure but also visible from the road; **SECONDED** by F Hall; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, J Lovelace, F Hall, R Helmecki, M Reeves, J O'Brien, and R Field **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0. No Further Discussion.

5. New Business

A. Kiosk installation project Viney Hill Brook Preserve

F Hall reported that the Kiosk will be situated in a location that is a short way down the path on the right-hand side, which is highly visible.

B. Schedule Work Party Installation of New Bog Bridge

Brief discussion on the installation of the bog bridges. Date will be scheduled after R Helmecki installs the Kiosk at Bushy Hill Park.

C. Discuss Invasives, Treatments, Methods of Disposal

K Tucker asked R Field to comment on invasive treatment. R Field stated that there are two methods to dispose of the garlic mustard: place in the land fill (which is not allowed in Essex) or incinerate. R Field stated that he is in a quandary as to how to safely dispose of the garlic mustard. M Reeves suggested utilizing Round Up on the pulled out invasives.

D. Other

No other business.

6. Financial Report

K Tucker opened discussion and update on the ECC budget. It was noted that there will be a small balance remaining in the budget after all pending expenses have been paid. There was a discussion about designating the remaining balance toward work done by Clark's Custom Services and some of it will be designated toward materials for the bog bridges. R Helmecki stated that he will purchase a new chain for the chain saw.

7. Adjournment

MOTION made by R Helmecki at 8:54 PM to adjourn until the June 11, 2020 regularly scheduled meeting; meeting site TBD; **SECONDED** by J Lovelace; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, J Lovelace, F Hall, R Helmecki, M Reeves, J O'Brien, and R Field **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0. No Further Discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella A. Caione

Stella A. Caione, Recording Clerk