

## Conway Conservation Commission

### **WEDNESDAY, May 13, 2020 6:30P.M. DIGITAL MEETING**

Present: Chair Rob Adair, Peter Minnich, Dan Lucy, Larry Huemmler, Linda Kearney, David Weathers, David Swirk (Conway Scenic RR), Chris McKay (White Mountains NEMBA/RideNoco), Adam Sandahl (CMA Engineers)

Absent: Vice Chair Nat Lucy, Pat Ferland

The meeting was called to order by Chair Rob Adair at 6:32pm. It was explained that in accordance with the emergency measures put in place by the Governor, the commission was meeting digitally.

#### **1. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes for the **April 8th, 2020** commission meeting were approved with no changes. The motion was seconded by Linda Kearney, with Dan Lucy abstaining.

#### **2. Public Comment**

No public comment was given.

#### **3. Reports and Other Business**

**Conway Scenic Railroad:** David Swirk

David Swirk of the Conway Scenic Railroad brought forward two subjects for the commission to discuss: concerns about a railroad tour of Redstone Quarry, and tree removal near the tracks in Whitaker Woods.

The primary concern of the commission towards the tours of Redstone Quarry was the safety of the site. Linda Kearney pointed out that the site was potentially quite dangerous, with scrap metal and other potential hazards that add up to a bit of a liability. It was also noted that with the current pandemic, the project would likely have to wait quite a while before beginning in earnest. Chair Rob Adair expressed optimism for the plan, and it was decided that Bob Cottrell (the potential tour guide), Rob Adair, Larry Huemmler, and Peter Minnich would take a look around the site and figure out what a tour would look like.

David Swirk also explained to the commission that because of the downtime due to the pandemic, the railroad was doing a fair bit of maintenance. This included some of the rail line in Whitaker Woods, a commission-managed property. He noted that there were multiple standing dead trees that potentially posed a danger to the rail line, and requested permission to remove them. He noted that it will be difficult to convince someone to take the wood away after it

had been cut. It was decided that the trees in question would be flagged and examined.

**White Mountains NEMBA:** Chris McKay

Chris McKay, president of the White Mountains NEMBA, gave the commission an update on the state of NEMBA. He described an update to a NEMBA map that identified extraction points in order to increase safety and better communicate with rescue services. In addition, he noted that the area would be updated with more maps/trail kiosks.

He then described the work being done on the parallel Cranmore-Black Cap trail the Commission approved 2 years ago. A professional trail builder NEMBA hired plans to break ground on August 1st, working with the White Mountain Trail Collective. He also described two proposed single-track trails on CCC-managed property (see attached 2020 Strategic Plan):

1. A new trail on the east side of Black Cap Mountain/Hurricane Mountain Road Common Lands connecting to Corridor 19 snowmobile trail)
2. A new trail above the existing Sidehill and Rattlesnake trails connecting to the existing “Swamp Trail”.

Peter Minnich noted that trail #2 above would run close to land owned by The Nature Conservancy. Chris explained that the trail will get up as high as possible without encroaching on TNC land.

Chris McKay then noted that the White Mountains NEMBA may split into an independent 501c organization, and asked for commission thoughts. Rob noted that he has been working with NEMBA for 20 years, and that there were good reasons to establish a more local organization. His primary concern was that the relationship that the commission had built with NEMBA be preserved and passed on to the new organization.

**Green Hill Road Solar Project:** Adam Sandahl

Adam Sandahl of CMA Engineers was on the call to address a wetlands permit application submitted for the Green Hill Road Solar Project. He was hoping to expedite the wetlands application sent to the town in February. The site is accessed by a gravel utility road used by Eversource to maintain power lines, and has two existing culverts constructed along it. It was requested that the commission provide a letter giving our comments on the development, and decided that David Weathers would go and survey the site with Mr. Adair.

### **Shedd Woods Tree Removal:** David Weathers

David Weathers updated the commission on the ongoing project of removing the six trees near the Shedd Woods property. He explained that the trees needed to be removed with a crane, which will incur a larger expense. The landowner is in agreement with the commission, and will handle the cost, since the commission does not have money in the budget to cover the removal.

### **Member Roundtable**

During the member roundtable, Larry Huemmler updated the commission on the goings on of the Saco-Swift River Advisory Committee.

Rob described a conflict between a woman and a landowner abutting the Abenaki lands. The woman had attempted to make a trail, the landowner moved brush back on the trail to try to get her to stop, and Rob was eventually called to settle the situation (as well as town manager Tom Holmes and Lt. Mattei of Conway PD).

Rob also told the commission that there were reports that someone had possibly been attempting to steal scrap metal from Redstone Quarry. Tom Holmes was consulted and suggested the police be called to possibly set up a game camera. Officer True of Conway PD visited the site but did not notice anything. Rob went to the site and found a wheel from one of the lathes and a heavy steel box placed alongside a dirt road off the powerline, as had been reported.

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:36pm.**