

Buckland, MA Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes


May 1, 2023

Via Zoom

Agenda

1. Open Meeting
2. Review Previous Meeting Minutes
3. Woodland Presentation by Kate Conlin
4. Plan for our Future with Eric Halloran
5. Other Items within 48 hours
6. Public Comment
7. Close Meeting

Attendees

 Kathy Lytle, chair
Alex Meade, member
Steve Howland, member
Mary Knipe, member
Eric Halloran, Plants for Our Future
Kate Conlin, Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts
Janet Sinclair, public

1. Chair Kathy Lytle opened the meeting at 6:29 pm
2. The minutes of the April 3rd, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Member Steve Howland moved to approve the minutes; Chair Lytle seconded the motion; all members present voted in favor.
3. Kate Conlin of the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts (WPNWM) (formerly the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership, MTWP) made a presentation in advance of the May 6th, 2023 Town Meeting warrant asking residents to vote whether or not to join the organization.
 - a. The WPNWM is a "quasi-public" organization, enabled through legislation
 - b. Joining the WPNWM would make Buckland eligible to apply for state grants through the organization; \$20,000 grants are available annually. Surrounding towns have benefitted from these grants.
 - c. The WPNWM covers the area from Williamstown to Leyden, Conway to Peru.Commission members asked questions of Ms. Conlin
 - a. Formerly, the MTWP seemed to have as part of its objective the organizing of small landowners to attract loggers - is that still a part of the WPNWM's goal? Ms. Conlin noted the organization seeks to support economic development while protecting land from development, and there are no specific logging initiatives at this time.

- b. Member Alex Meade reviewed the purpose of the Conservation Commission, and noted logging activities are often in conflict with the Commission's objectives. Members suggested Ms. Conlin be clear in the presentation to Town Meeting about the organization's current purposes and plans.
- 4. Eric Halloran offered a presentation for Plant for the Future
 - a. Deerfield River Watershed Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU) would like to plant native tree/shrubs on the property of Robert Spencer, across from the Wilder Homestead and along Clesson Brook, in order to prevent erosion, shade the brook, and engage volunteers.
 - b. The project will be similar in nature to the work done at Bear River in Ashfield in 2022, which engaged fifth grade students from Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School, and received funds from MTRSD.
 - c. TU has obtained permission from the property owner, and consulted with Eversource to limit the height of plant material at mature growth.
 - d. The Buckland Historical Society has been consulted.
 - e. Advice has been sought about appropriate native plants and riparian buffers in order to provide shade and food for area species.

Commission members asked questions of Mr. Halloran

- a. What is sought from the Conservation Commission? Mr. Halloran is offering information about the project, and seeking information about compliance - would this require an NOI? Member Meade responded that possibly nothing is needed, or maybe an RDA, and will research that to fully inform TU and the Commission members.
 - b. Commission members voiced enthusiasm for the project, and asked for the PDF of Mr. Halloran's presentation.

5. Other Items

The Commission received an email concerning a septic system, but does not currently have access to the FRCOG database. Access has been requested.

6. Public Comment

Janet Sinclair, public, shared her experience serving as a representative to the MTWP, and her involvement with organizational conversations about the biomass energy plant and the Forest Legacy program. Ms. Sinclair noted that it was a controversial time at the MTWP, but that in her comments today, she is not speaking to what is current at the WPNWM.

- 7. Member Howland moved to adjourn the meeting; member Meade seconded the motion; all present voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm

Respectfully submitted, Alison Cornish, Boards Clerk