

**Thornton Conservation Commission  
Monthly Meeting  
September 12, 2023 - 3:00 p.m. at  
Thornton Town Hall**

**Minutes**

Present: Mike Boisvert, Al Lewis, Myrtle Lewis, Jerry Sobolewski  
Absent: Katri Gurney  
Guests: Catherine Knowler from Central New Hampshire Climbing

Myrtle Lewis called the meeting to order at 3:08 PM.

The minutes of the previous meeting were distributed electronically. A motion to accept the minutes of the August 8, 2023 meeting as presented passed unanimously, with 4 members present at the time of the vote.

**1. Central New Hampshire Climbers' Association Proposed Parking Area Off Tripoli Road**

- Catherine [Kayte] Knowler from Central New Hampshire Climbing [CHNC] organization has a Purchase and Sales Agreement with a landowner in Thornton to build a parking area for about 40-50 cars for climbers who use Russell Crags/ Merriam Woods for rock climbing. Climbers are parking along the road and nearby landowners are complaining about the congestion. She shared a sketch of the climbing areas off Tripoli Road and where the parking area would be. If travelling off I-93 on Tripoli Road, the parking area would be just before the White Mountain National Forest Gate on the left. She did not know how many acres are being purchased.
  - Myrtle Lewis asked if the parking area is near any brooks, wetlands, etc. Kayte indicated the soil is soft. Thornton Conservation Commission recommend she contact a Wetland Specialist to determine if the parking area is being built in wetlands and if so, then a Wetlands Permit would be needed from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Sciences.
  - Myrtle was to provide contact information of Joe Peznola who may be of assistance because these sorts of initiatives are of interest by Thornton's Economic Development Program.
  - Myrtle recommended that she seek legal counsel regarding the Town of Thornton's Planning Board requiring a variance for the parking lot. Jerry Sobolewski is part of the Thornton's Zoning Board and they did not see a need for a variance.
  - Myrtle provided suggestions regarding putting together a presentation for the Planning Board with photos, sketches, etc. to solve parking problems.

**2. Project Updates**

- Robin's Nest Road Parking Area: Joe Peznola is reaching out to NH Fish & Game to assess their interest in improving the boat launch. The NH Department of Transportation [NHDOT] would be open for NH Fish & Game to developing a boat ramp. There are a number of them on NHDOT land with Right of Way [ROW] already.
- The Preserve at the Pemigewasset: No update.
- Owl's Nest: No update.
- Blake Mountain Project – Cabins at 2635 Route 3: Proposal to build 15 'glamping' units on 3 to 4 acres. Planning Board seemed to be fine with the idea.
- Hiking Trail Linking Waterville Valley and Thornton "Grand Circuit": Mike Boisvert doesn't see the need to invest time in making a pitch with having the hiking trail renamed Waterville Valley/Thornton Loop as suggested by Mary Ellen Sakura. Kudo's for her thinking about our town but the idea is originating from Waterville Valley and they will be

investing a lot of their energy to make this vision a reality. Any map of the hiking trail will be associated with the existing hiking trails in Waterville Valley.

- Family Hike to Peaked Pond: Mike Boisvert and his partner Jon Normand lead hikes all the time and look forward to it. Mike asked everyone to wear their Thornton Conservation Committee shirts that are wicking so we can stand out. Mike will begin the hike by mentioning a few safety tips.

### **3. Thornton Natural Resources Inventory [NRI] Update**

- Myrtle Lewis shared that TCC will be partnering with the Geological Information System [GIS] Professor (Hyun Joong Kim) at Plymouth State University this fall. They should be able to do all the maps we need for the NRI and it will be finished by the end of the year. There are two dates provided by the two students to meet us. After some discussion, Myrtle Lewis and Jerry Sobolewski will meet with them on September 21<sup>st</sup> at Noon.
- Myrtle has provided an example of maps we would like. Myrtle prepared one set and Mike Boisvert prepared another set as a means to start the discussion with the students to determine what they are able to do.

### **4. Thornton Planning Board Meeting**

- Myrtle Lewis will attend the next meeting on September 21<sup>st</sup> at 6PM.

### **5. Other Business**

- Myrtle Lewis indicated we have \$750 in our budget and perhaps we could have hats made for TCC members. Myrtle will look into it.
- Mike Boisvert asked if there is still \$750 in our budget, where did the money come from to pay for the mailers to promote the DES presentation on the Shoreland Protection Act as well as expenses associated with Thornton Night Out. Myrtle explained that was paid out of the Conservation Fund because these were Conservation related matters.
- Mike Boisvert suggested we should think about putting forth a Town Warrant that the monies collected by the Town for when a property is changed from Current Use not be capped yearly. Most Towns do not impose such a cap. We could have more funds available for when conservation opportunities arise such as paying for a conservation easement. Myrtle feels that would never pass given we are surrounded by the White Mountain National Forest. Mike Boisvert feels that is why a Natural Resource Inventory is needed with maps, data and recommendations to support our position that more funds are needed in the Conservation Fund.
- Jerry Sobolewski asked about available resources for his condo association off Mill Brook Road with 600 acres to address a concern about forest fire prevention and emergency preparedness. Jerry has spoken with the Fire Chief but still has concerns. Discussion ensued.

- 6. Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5pm. The next Commission meeting will be on Tuesday, October 10<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Boisvert, Thornton Conservation Committee Member