

These minutes are draft until approved

___Approved

___Approved with changes.

Effingham Conservation Commission Meeting minutes, February 6, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m. Surprise guests were Jill Emerson and Hailey Williams from GMCG, to present the annual report on water quality monitoring at the sites in Effingham. The report compared the results from 2022 sampling to the average of results from 2017-2021 for six parameters at the five sites in Effingham. 2022 was the twentieth year of the RIVERS water quality monitoring program.

They also reported that GMCG will host a presentation on the recently completed culvert study on April 19, which will include Zoom access. Fish and Game and USGS are making recommendations for culverts in need of work, based on data collected by GMCG. Funding could be available to help the town implement the work needed on highlighted culverts.

Organizational Issues:

- The minutes of the Jan. 2, 2023 meeting were approved with one correction. Kamal noted that the minutes gave the site of the April 21 presentation as the Effingham Public Library when the location will be the Effingham Town Offices, 68 School Street, at 6:30 p.m.
- Financial Report: Jack reported that the ECC Fund has a balance of \$16,960 after the previously uncredited budget surplus was applied. The Invasive Plant Capital Reserve Fund has a balance of \$13,657. Pending approval by the voters at Town Meeting, the 2023 budget will be \$4,355.
- LUCT Warrant Article: Chair reported that the BOS approved the warrant article removing the cap on the share that ECC can receive from Land Use Change Tax revenue. The Budget Committee had disapproved, but legal counsel asserted that the Budget Committee had no authority over an article that did not call for a specific appropriation. Where this article merely calls for a different distribution of monies already coming in, it can go in the warrant with no mention of the Budget Committee's opinion. Chair and Jack produced a draft of a fact sheet explaining the warrant article to voters. Members discussed some edits to this otherwise excellent starting document, providing more information on the value of open space compared to either residential or commercial development.

Water Issues:

- Tim presented a quick summary of the ZBA hearing and the Superior Court case regarding the Appeal of an Administrative Decision brought by GMCG and abutters against the Planning Board decision not to require Meena LLC to get a Special Use Permit for the gas station project underway at the Boyle's Market site. For several reasons, the appeal was denied. The full account is available in the ZBA minutes and supporting documentation may be requested under RSA 91-A for anyone cursed with insomnia.

Land Issues:

- Chair asked the BOS about hiring loggers to clean up storm damage at the LLP. The BOS has not responded with a firm commitment.
- Members discussed finding a trail builder to complete the last little bit in the PRCP. Kamal observed that the job is likely too small to interest a big professional outfit, but that ECC might find a small but knowledgeable service provider who might not be a full time professional.

Education and Outreach:

- Members discussed whether to stick with the single topic of Bats for the Earth Day Poster Contest at EES, or to expand it to include birds and butterflies in parallel with the UNH presentation on April 21. After spirited debate, the members decided that sticking with the single topic of bats would lead to narrower but deeper understanding compared to the potential with three types that one or more might end up neglected, and that the environmental connection would be lost. EES Principal Patti Morrissey had already supported the initial proposal for bats.

Other Business and Special Reports:

- Tim will write up the annual summary for the town's annual report and send it to Audrey on or before Friday, Feb. 24.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, March 6, 2023, at the municipal offices, School Street, at 6:30 p.m.

Members present: Emelyn Albert (*Chair*); Diane Jarecki; Steve Jarecki; Harry Libby; Kamal Nath; Tim White (*Recording Secretary*); Jack Williams (*Vice Chair/Treasurer*). Absent: Virginia Wrabel(*alt.*); Bill Wrabel (*alt.*)

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tim White, Recording Secretary

These minutes are draft until approved