

Town of Bedford
Conservation Commission Minutes
May 23, 2023

A meeting of the Bedford Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, May 23, at the BCTV meeting room at 10 Meetinghouse Road, Bedford. Present were Patricia Grogan (Chair), Peter Sullivan (member), Deborah Evans (member), Julie Donovan (member), Kathleen Bemiss (Town Council alternate member), Stephanie Jones (member), Joanne Smith (alternate), Kathleen Ports (Associate Planner). Absent was William Carter (Vice Chairman, Town Council Representative), Stephen Clough (Planning Board representative), Grant Killian (alternate member).

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Grogan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., initiated Board introductions and appointed Ms. Bemiss and Ms. Smith to vote. Ms. Ports reviewed the agenda.

II. Election of Officers

III. Approval of Minutes: March 28, 2023

IV. Dredge and Fill Applications: None

V. New Business:

1. Request for Expenditure of Funds for Pulpit Rock Signs and Trail Infrastructure
2. Grant Projects

VI. Old Business:

1. Updates on previously reviewed permits and ZBA applications
2. CUB Day Report
3. Big Read Grant
4. Website Content
5. Marston-Dunlap Archaeological Study (*moved to nonpublic session*)

VII. Pulpit Rock Subcommittee Report

VIII. Trail Stewards Report:

1. National Trails Day - June 4, 2023 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM

IX. Announcements:

1. Pulpit Rock Subcommittee will meet on August 23 at 55 Constitution Drive at 6:30PM.
2. Bedford will be celebrating National Trails Day on June 4, 2023 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Several programs will be available. Please check the Parks and Recreation page for details and free registration.

X. Non-Public Session:

Per RSA 91-A:3, II(d) for consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community.

Chair Grogan read the Mission Statement:

The mission of the Bedford Conservation Commission is to protect, preserve and conserve the Town's natural resources and open space land for the common good. To provide stewardship and management of conservation lands, protect wetlands and vernal pools, and plan and acquire land for conservation purposes. To work with landowners to administer State and Town wetlands regulations. To advise other Town boards on environmental impacts and alternative considerations regarding development projects. To promote conservation activities and communicate with the citizens of Bedford on important environmental issues. Our motto is: *Keeping Bedford Beautiful*.

II. Election of Officers

Chair Grogan requested Ms. Bemiss oversee the nomination of the Chair. Ms. Bemiss accepted and asked for a motion.

MOTION: Ms. Evans nominated Ms. Grogan as Chair of the Commission. Ms. Donovan seconded the motion. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. Motion carries.

MOTION: Chair Grogan nominated Ms. Jones as Vice Chair of the Commission. Ms. Jones accepted the nomination. There were no further nominations for Vice Chair. Ms. Bemiss seconded the motion. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. Motion carries.

Chair Grogan welcomed the newest member, Joanne Smith, to the Conservation Commission. Ms. Ports announced Mr. Sullivan is now a regular member.

III. Approval of Minutes – March 28, 2023

MOTION: Ms. Bemiss moved to approve the March 28, 2023 meeting minutes as written. Vice Chair Jones seconded the motion. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. Motion carries.

Appointment of Liaison to Pulpit Rock Subcommittee

Chair Grogan said the Commission is required to appoint a liaison for the Pulpit Rock Subcommittee. Ms. Deborah Evans filled that role over the past year, and she is willing to continue to serve. Therefore:

MOTION: Chair Grogan moved to nominate Ms. Evans Liaison to the Pulpit Rock Subcommittee. Vice Chair Jones seconded the motion. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. Motion carries.

Ms. Ports said I jumped ahead of you. I apologize. Chair Grogan said that's OK. Trail Stewards are a group of volunteers rather than an official subcommittee. There is no liaison to the group, and it may be warranted to have one. Trail stewards could certainly make an appointment for a liaison if we want to. Would anyone like that role? OK seeing none, we'll move on.

IV. Dredge and Fill Applications to Review: None

V. New Business:

1. Request for Expenditure of Funds for Pulpit Rock Signs and Trail Infrastructure

Ms. Ports said you have several requests for expenditure of funds in front of you this evening. And I have an additional one to bring to you. Let's start with the VanLoan. I'm sorry, let's start with the Pulpit Rock signs. I don't know how often all of you get out, but the signs are pretty damaged and disturbed out at Pulpit Rock. And there are a lot of places where we could use more signage or better signage. And so, the subcommittee has done a sign plan. There's a request for approximately 46 signs, which, I know, sounds like a lot. What they've done is we're sticking with our white background with the green font and the brown trim and the same font style as the signs that you guys ordered about a year ago. We are going to color code the arrows to match the trail blaze. And they'll be slightly bigger signs. And that was one other thing. Oh, and we are going to have a protective coating on these for graffiti because that area is subject to a lot of graffiti damage. So, the cost is a is about \$1,200 dollars.

While we're placing the sign order, I have a couple other signs I would like to order from some of the other areas. The Cobb Trail and Benedictine doesn't have signs. We have all new trails out at Sebbins, and none of those trails are signed. And I think there's like one or two on the snowshoe route that we were thinking at Legacy that we would like to sign. Oh, and the new Fairy House Trail in Marston might, or adjacent to Mueller, might need a couple of signs. So, the request is for \$1,500 dollars to purchase new signs and expecting that this will be it until we add a new property. Ms. Smith asked, do the signs go on existing poles or on trees? Or how does that work? Ms. Ports replied, right now, most of them are on trees. If there's a junction without a tree that's suitable, we put them on a 4 by 4 post. So, it's a little bit of both, but mostly on trees. What they've done in the past is they've bolted them into the tree, and then every couple of years you back out the screws so that the trees have room to grow. I think that's the plan. Ms. Smith asked, you don't need to put any new posts in for the signs that are... Ms. Ports answered, I don't think so. We tried to really focus on using trees, so we didn't have to add a bunch of costs for the wood.

Ms. Evans asked, do we have signs for Marston already? Ms. Ports replied, we do.

Ms. Bemiss said this piece of paper says that you wanted 45 signs for \$1,700 dollars. So, this is already more than the additional signs you wanted. Ms. Ports replied, there should have been two sides. Did it not get... Ms. Bemiss said oh, OK, I'm sorry. I was just looking at that. Ms. Ports said yes, I had two bids. Ms. Bemiss said OK. And my other question was, you know the scouting project where they put the markers in? Ms. Ports said yes. Ms. Bemiss continued, so we're not being inundated with signs in that we're not having like a trail sign and then a marker sign? Ms. Ports replied, no, those markers are

typically along the trail where you would have maybe blazes. And they're every 10th of a mile, approximately. Out at Pulpit, there's sort of a tradition to have the beginning and the end of the trail named, and that sign tends to be kind of up high and a few steps into the trail. So that's why there's a little bit more signs than we typically do at our other conservation areas. It is our most popular conservation area. We have visitors from all over Town, and we were recently identified as one of the top ten best places to hike in New Hampshire. And then we don't have a lot of great junction maps. Or we have a lot of tags that are written on and they're very unclear. So, a lot of these are brand new signs, much needed though. Ms. Bemiss said, perfect.

MOTION: Vice Chair Jones moved to expend not more than \$1,500 towards the purchase of signage at the conservation properties. Ms. Evans seconded the motion. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. Motion carries.

Van Loan Property:

Ms. Ports said some of you might recall before COVID there was some discussion about replacing the Van Loan Bridge which crosses the Riddle brook. It's a very wide crossing. It's about 42 feet. If you measure end to end for the existing abutments, it's almost 48 feet. So, finding a structure that's a full span of that creek is very challenging. It's also very difficult to get into, so having an iron I-beam delivered is just really not a great option. The original plan back in 2020 had been to build basically two bridges with a center pier, to get the full span. But putting that center pier in a tier three stream, like Riddle brook, requires a major wetland impact permit, which substantially adds to the cost and the process and time frame. And so, the engineer who helped us look at different options back in 2020 has since retired. I had asked him, is there any chance we could span that bridge or that crossing? He researched a wooden arch bridge. And we contemplated and talked about that for a long time, and for some reason I kept holding back and I think, ultimately, that was the right decision. Because the challenge with that is you are using force to create this arch and tying that into the abutments—we don't really know if those abutments will work. And so, we could end up still having to excavate and shore up those abutments. It's a lot of wood and it's kind of a complicated design, even though it's very cool looking. So finally, Alex actually came back to me and said, well, what about an aluminum bridge? And so, I contacted the vendor. And my first question was what happens if a tree falls on this thing? He was completely transparent, sent me a picture and said, yeah, it happens. It's not pretty. A lot of the time we can fix the bridge. So, he sent me an example of about a \$14,000 bridge where the tree had fallen, and they were able to repair it for \$2,000 dollars. So, it seemed like a pretty good option. We don't have to bolt it down or we don't have to worry about its relationship to the abutments. We can use the abutments to set the bridge, and it comes all in parts with the assembly instructions, so it's easy to transport and build on site. And it includes everything except the decking, so we'd have to purchase the decking. The other consideration is, are there any trees out there that would be a hazard to a new bridge? I was out yesterday with a consulting forester and there was one tree that we thought we would have to take down that he didn't feel comfortable taking down. So, the current rate for tree service is about \$1,700 dollars a day. So, we could potentially address more than one tree, but that's an additional cost. We could consider grant funding, which is something I hadn't included in this. There are new grant requirements for the Recreational Trails Program grant that requires American bought materials. It used to be just like iron and steel, but now it's aluminum and some plastics and wood. And so, it's not 100 percent clear yet. I'd have to do some research to figure out if this bridge could be covered by that plan.

I think what we should do is potentially Table this discussion until I find out whether or not the bridge could be eligible for grant funding. And then if not, I can bring it back to you guys and we can decide or make a decision. And if you wanted to go out and do a site visit or use this time to go out and look on your own... I think the goal would be to do the construction in the fall when the water levels are dry. If we pursue a grant, we wouldn't be doing the work until next year because that's when the grant funding would hit. Just something to think about, I guess.

Ms. Bemiss said, so, this is a log—currently the bridge. The tree that you were talking about might need to be cut down. Are there any trees in that area that we could cut to replace this? Ms. Ports replied no. They took all the trees when they built this bridge. Ms. Bemiss said I have one in my yard you can come get. Ms. Ports replied, same problem as the steel beam. Chair Grogan said I don't like taking down a tree if it's not dead or sick or... That's just me. Ms. Bemiss said, and I personally love a log bridge because it's much more fun. I love that. You know, it's like you're doing something you're not supposed to. Chair Grogan said and the tree is going to destroy that, too, if it falls on it. It's cheaper to repair it. Ms. Ports said I asked the forester that the other day. I said what do you think about this aluminum bridge? And he said, they don't make pressure treated lumber like they used to. And he said you can easily lose a wooden bridge, if it's the right tree. So, we felt like there's one tree that if it fell, would fall on the bridge. Chair Grogan said I like the aesthetics of the wood, too, in the woods. All the bridges up north are wood. They're not aluminum. That's my thought. Ms. Ports said the Town of Milton used an aluminum bridge on one of their snowmobile crossings. Chair Grogan said it's rare to see it, though. Ms. Ports agreed, it is rare.

Ms. Evans said, Madam Chair, can I just ask—the wetland permit that would be required if there was a pier in the middle—would that be likely granted? Ms. Ports answered, I talked to the State about it, and I think that if we didn't have another option or alternative, and there really isn't another location on the stream that's really better than the crossing that we have. So, I think that they would probably ultimately permit it. That is still an option. We could still do that.

Ms. Bemiss said may I ask one other question, and stupid question—wildlife—are they more likely to transverse a wooden structure or a log? Or would they go over? I'm looking at you (Mr. Sullivan) because... Chair Grogan asked would turtles go over it? Mr. Sullivan answered, cows have an issue with metal grating for example. Granted cows, I imagine they're not roaming through the woods around here. I haven't seen one, but I guess if you assume that other animals would be kind of like that, maybe they'd be a little bit nervous of the aluminum versus wood. So, I don't know if it would make much of a difference. Chair Grogan said we'll talk about it next meeting and... Ms. Ports said yes, it would have wooden decking on top of the walking surface, and the creek does dry most years. So, I'm sure some wildlife just walk across the channel.

Ms. Evans asked would a wooden bridge be eligible for grant money the same as an aluminum one would? Ms. Ports answered, possibly. Again, the challenge with the aluminum and the wood is that they're having a hard time establishing that it meets the criteria for Buy America. And so, at the meeting this past week, the trail grant coordinator suggested that it might not be worth your time to apply for a bridge that was all wood, because, until they get that resolved, they don't know if they're going to be able to authorize those. Ms. Evans said thank you.

Mr. Sullivan said when you were speaking with the engineer, did the idea of a suspension bridge ever come up? Or is that it would need kind of two heavy of support at each end? Ms. Ports replied, again, it is just a lot more complicated. Chair Grogan said that would be more expensive, too, don't you think?

Ms. Ports said it just depends on how you cable, and having the right equipment out there to do that would be very challenging. If you're interested, I can send you some of the original design work. They looked at maybe four different options in 2020, and I can send you those reviews and calculations. Chair Grogan said sure. We can all think about it and talk about it at the next meeting.

Ms. Evans asked how long does the bridge that's currently there? Is it in bad repair or how long of a lifespan does it have? Are you just being sort of preemptive to repair it? Ms. Ports replied, I think it was installed in like the early 2000s or 2007—somewhere in that zone, and it's very soft and saggy. And I think it's, I don't know, if you look at the abutments where it's attached to the abutments, you can start to see that there is some separation going on in that location that seems newer to me. Because I've been watching this bridge for the last 2 1/2 years. But I don't think it's in imminent danger. We haven't gotten to the point where we have to close it because we're afraid somebody's going to get hurt. Ms. Evans said thank you.

Funding for Trail Materials:

Ms. Ports said I provided you with a new estimate of trail material expenditures. So, we're asking for \$3,600. Pulpit Rock had their trail workday in May and purchased about \$300 worth of materials. There's some left over, and there's a couple more things that they're hoping to accomplish. We have three areas on the new snowshoe trails where we would like to install crossings. We've been talking to a Girl Scout troop about building one or two of those and haven't gotten anywhere recently, although they have a lot of interest in doing that. If they did, they would do the fundraising and pay for the materials. If they don't, it's about \$200.00 a crossing.

Marston Dunlap has about 5 crossings. Two of those we've addressed by reworking some of the rocks. Two are pretty wide, wet areas and one is more of a flowing drainage. And so that's why the cost is a little bit higher is those two 24-foot crossings.

Van Loan has, and I didn't take pictures and any of that, so I apologize. Maybe that would have been helpful. I can do that if you guys are unsure about any of these requests. So, at Van loan, we built a new trail on the backside of a tributary to Riddle Brook. And there's a little crossing there. Right now, I might not feel comfortable crossing it or a young kid wouldn't. Most of the season, you can cross it. So, we could leave it and just let people decide when they want to cross and when they don't. But we're thinking it's about a 16-foot bridge. It's low enough to the ground. It doesn't need railings. And then under the power lines, I don't know if you guys have walked under the power line section of the trail, but those structures are very old. They're on tires, and it's not the greatest crossing because it's a mix of rocks and structures. So, we looked at doing a relocation on the first section, which would take out that need for any bridging there. And then it would be like a series of three crossings from there to get through that area. And we have a lot of kiosks with old shingles that probably need to get replaced, and we are looking at, especially with the Pulpit rock sign changes, doing some of those smaller little mini kiosks that have like a trail map at them, and say 'you are here.' Those might be helpful at Van loan or Legacy or Sebbins as well. I don't know how much they cost. I just put \$200.00 in there for each of those. So, it's a total of \$3,600. And you guys, ask questions if you want more information, if you want a site walk, if you want to approve some of it and wait on some more, we can do that too.

Ms. Bemiss said for the roofing, would we consider using some metal roofing so then we don't ever have to replace it? Ms. Ports replied we could. Yes, one of the things that the Forester suggested was we add a copper flashing because that prevents some of the moss buildup that degrades the shingles so quickly.

But I didn't ask about metal. Ms. Bemiss said yes, that might be... Ms. Ports said I would also say that we have not asked for any donations at this point, and that is something we could do. I, as a Town employee, can't do that. But the Commission could, or my trail stewards could go to Lowe's or any other local lumber provider and ask for some donations or saying, hey, we're purchasing this much, could we have a discount of some sort? So that is also an option. Ms. Bemiss said right, and the kiosks are not that big. Some of these roofing companies may have scraps that are the right size, but they can't do anything with them on a house. Ms. Ports said yes, that's a good idea. Ms. Bemiss continued, so, if you give me some overall dimensions—like what would be the smallest pieces that we could take—I'll ask. Ms. Ports replied, OK. Ms. Bemiss said, and I would assume that we would want them all to be consistently colored throughout the entire Town. So, if we get green—we don't want green, red, blue. We want them to be uniform. I'm just imagining. Chair Grogan said well, if they're free, I don't know. We might just take them. Ms. Ports said uniform is nice. Chair Grogan agreed, it is, but if they're free... Ms. Bemiss said OK. Chair Grogan said so, we're not going to approve any of this tonight? Ms. Ports answered, I would be happy if you did, but I'm just saying you have the option. Chair Grogan said I'm fine with approving it. Ms. Bemiss said I'm fine with approving it as well, and I will ask, though, in the meantime. Ms. Ports said and you can also just say on the condition that we seek donations in kind or a discount or something. And if someone's willing to do that, that would be helpful. Chair Grogan said these need to be done. I've seen. Does someone want to make a motion to approve?

MOTION: Mr. Sullivan moved to approve the requested estimated \$3,600 for expenditure of Conservation funds for trail materials. Ms. Evans seconded the motion. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. Motion carries.

Ms. Ports said in 2017, the Planning Department worked with Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission. Well, I should back up. One of the roles of the Conservation Commission as outlined in the Rules of Procedure, is to maintain an index of our conservation properties. And so, we started doing that in 2017. The Planning Department worked with Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission. And I handed out an example map to all of you. There's a big binder, quite literally, in my office of all the conservation properties, and I have all the easement language and some of the maps and plans in this binder. And this data layer is also on the Town GIS. You can click conservation lands, and this information will come up.

Since we created this document in 2017, we've had some changes in terms of... our conservation easements are now held by PLC, not BLT. And we have a new property. We also have several open spaces that are in developments within the Town, but the Town owns them. So, we sort of manage those as passive conservation areas. And then we also have privately owned conservation areas that we really didn't consider the first time. I think that was before actually PLC owned any land. That was before they finally had acquired Tarr, and now they owned additional parcels at Marston Dunlap. And then PLC also holds conservation easements on several other private properties in Town. So, if we capture all those other categories, there's about 18 more maps that we need. The 19th is the big overview map. So, I have been trying to work with them to get some updates. They have gotten really busy, and they're also undergoing a rate change. So, in order to try to get this work captured before a big rate change, they offered to do a flat fee for all the work, and that costs \$3,600. The Planning Department is requesting \$3,600 to have the maps updated or have the 18 new maps and one revised overview map. And we can do that. We can also look at what categories you do or don't want on the maps or in the Atlas, if there's something you wanted to change. We talked about adding some of the Town parks with the recreational fields just for a better understanding of our open space.

One thing we had wanted to include was the common lands that are owned by the Homeowners Association that are part of the cluster subdivision. But it just was getting too costly to add all those additional layers. So, we haven't added those at this time.

Ms. Bemiss said may I ask some questions? So, in our current plan, in our current book, we are missing about 18 properties that are not currently mapped as they should be. So that's number one. We would not include open spaces that are associated with like cluster developments—like Bedford Three Corners has their own private piece, so that would not be included within this. Ms. Ports answered that one is included, because the Town holds a conservation easement on it. So, if we hold an easement on private property, it's included. Ms. Bemiss replied, OK. Ms. Ports said, I'm trying to think of another example. There's a new subdivision, Kara Meadows, that has open space, but that's owned by the residents in that subdivision. That's not in the Atlas because it's green space. Ms. Bemiss said it's green space, but I couldn't go there because it's private property. Ms. Ports said yes. Ms. Bemiss said OK, that makes sense. Ms. Ports said, and technically, I don't know that you can use the Bedford Three Corners either, but the Town has a responsibility in terms of the easement. So, this Board is responsible for overseeing and monitoring that easement and so that's why it's included as one of the Atlas properties.

Ms. Evans said, just to clarify, so if it's an open space in a development, the people in that development could choose to apply for Planning permission to develop that open space? Ms. Ports said no. If it's part of a homeowner's association, and they all share ownership, no. It's common land. It's protected. It can't be developed. Ms. Evans said OK. I was thinking more like a recreational facility for the development as opposed to more houses. Ms. Ports said right. So, for example, Greenfield Farm has both. They have recreational properties that they have given to the Town, that the Town maintains; so the fields there. And then they also have conservation areas that have easements on them. In that case, the Town holds those easements. Ms. Evans said yes, Thank you. Ms. Bemiss added, but they're not open to the general public in those areas. Ms. Ports agreed, no. Most of those aren't even usable, they're so wet. Ms. Bemiss asked, and this only applies to Town-owned, not school-owned? Ms. Ports replied, well, the school-owned would be private properties with easements on them. So, I was thinking that privately-owned conservation area, so the Town has three properties with conservation easements on them. And so, I would include those. Ms. Bemiss said OK. Ms. Ports said it's very specific to land set aside and protected for conservation purposes. We do have some properties that are open space within a subdivision that the Town owns that don't necessarily—like they're not protected with an easement, but they're intended to be maintained as open space. They could be developed for recreational purposes, a few of them, but they just never have been. So, I would be inclined to include those. Ms. Bemiss said OK. I think it sounds like a great idea because our current open space plan is out of date to some extent, and this would be a nice update. Ms. Ports said yes, it would be. And the map document will weaken, in addition to the GIS layer. As we update the website, we can have the Atlas online.

Ms. Bemiss said right. One final question. Would it be possible to put the onus on future developers to provide that information to us at the time of development, so then we can keep our Atlas up to date on a current basis? Ms. Ports replied yes. What we could do is get the templates. So, apparently, there was also just, between 2017 and now—the original work isn't around. I don't know what happened to it. So, in this case, if we re-establish the template and everything, then we could potentially share that layer with the firms, and when they're doing the survey work, have those properties added. Ms. Bemiss said I think that would make sense, and we're always keeping up to date. Ms. Ports said I'd have to talk to the Planning Director to find out if we could require that, but I don't see why not. Ms. Bemiss said thank you.

Chair Grogan said OK. Do you want us to make a motion on the Conservation Atlas? Ms. Ports said yes. It's \$3600.

MOTION: Mr. Sullivan moved the Conservation Commission authorize the expenditure of up to \$3,600 of Conservation funds for preparation of new Conservation atlas maps. Ms. Donovan seconded the motion. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. Motion carries.

2. Grant Projects

Ms. Ports said I've been doing a lot of research on the grant opportunities that are out there both for acquisitions as well as for trail work. And I think that it would be nice if our group could get organized and start queuing up projects that they'd like to see get done. That can be maintenance of infrastructure, but also potentially expanding some of our infrastructure. There's a couple of grants that I would like us to consider pursuing this year. So, one of them is at the Joppa Hill Farm. I don't know if any of you guys have been out there lately, but the Amherst Conservation Commission, at the bottom of the farm, there's a beaver pond there, and there's actually the old woods road. There's an old crossing there. They're using that existing crossing, and they've created a viewing platform. It's a full square with a bench, and it overlooks the beaver pond. They're replacing all their woodwork leading to both sides of that. And that ties really nicely to Joppa Hill Farm.

As you head down the hill from the farm to the conservation property at Amherst, we've got a bit of an erosion issue, and the trail is really rough. So, there are a couple of options we could just deal with. So, what's happened is you've got a deposition of soil on the Amherst property. And so, the idea would be to either ditch or create cross drains that would filter and then outfall to the wetland. There's like a vegetated wetland it could go into. And that trail is like eroded. So, it's like a gully, and then you would just regrade all that material. As you move up slope onto our Town property, it gets really narrow and encroached and super rocky. And so, if we wanted to consider improving the trail so that it could be used by a wider variety of users like, even strollers, and older individuals, then we would consider maybe a hard pack surfacing, which would be a lot of material. But then, also, another option would be on the other side of the Joppa Hill Farm is an old farm pond, and it's pretty deep and a nice size. I've had folks tell me they used to fish there when they were kids. So, there might be fish in it, or we might be able to have it stocked. And so, I had this thought of putting an all persons trail out to the pond and then a dock so that people could go out there as families, or a wide range of ages and use the pond for fishing or just another sort of recreational amenity at the farm to help disperse some of the use when it's busy over there. So those are 2 project ideas.

The bridge at Van Loan is another option. We might want to consider some safety improvements and wetland or water habitat improvement work at Pulpit Rock Conservation Area. And I had one other idea. Let me see if I can find it here. These are all my bridge calculations. So much fun. I guess I didn't bring it. Let me just think for a second. What was the other? I can't remember. I thought there was one other. I guess I just want us to be thinking about what recreational amenities do we want to add, or improve, or do we want to have a handicap accessible trail at some point? Do we want an interpretive trail? Do we just want to improve the trails that we have? Most of the grants have a match requirement. Some matches can be matched with another grant, and some grants like the Recreational Trails program—it's just 25 percent, and that can all be matched with labor. So, that's an easy one. It is capped at \$80,000. I guess I'm wondering... what do I need to ask you guys? Do we want to try to pursue any grants this year, and in order to make that decision, what kind of information would you want and need from me?

Ms. Evans said I really like the idea of making a more accessible trail, particularly at Joppa Hill Farm. And I like the idea of going to the pond, which, as you say, takes people away from the other area. I do think that the trail, if I'm understanding you correctly, that you're describing, that's eroded. It's too steep to be suitable for really older people who are not perhaps as mobile, or even pushing a stroller up that hill would be hard work if somebody sat in it. But I think going out to the farm, or if there was an option to another property that we could also explore, maybe South of 101, sort of balance it out. Ms. Ports said yes. One other idea out at the farm is to connect the farm with the recreational field, because, for two reasons: that would allow families at practices, or parents, to use the trail to exercise. But also, it would allow maybe some overflow parking. Right now, it's hard to get people from there to the farm on a big event because you have so much traffic to begin with. You don't necessarily want them on the road. So, having a trail between the recreational field and the farm circuit itself would also be another nice amenity. The farm is looking at doing some more maintenance around its fences and regular mowing so that those fields could be accessed, and that would also expand—those would just be like grass, but it would just create so much more connection and opportunity to move around out there and expand your workout options I guess or your pleasure options or viewing animal opportunities. Chair Grogan added or the big tree. Ms. Ports agreed, or the big tree, yes, if she makes it another winter. And we could look at a multi-phase project at Joppa Hill Farm, if we wanted to. Or I can start to look for what it would cost to do on all persons trail out to the pond with a dock. Chair Grogan said that sounds great.

Ms. Smith asked where is the pond? I know the farm quite well, but I have no idea where it is. Ms. Ports said yes, and it's really a beautiful spot. So, if you are on the east side of Joppa Hill Road, right across from the farm where all the wood chips are, if you parked there and walked around the edge of that field, it's right between the field and the wooded edge. Ms. Smith said OK. And that's Town property as well, the whole field across the street. OK. Ms. Ports said yes, and actually the Town owns a big chunk of woodland on the other side of the fields on the east side that I didn't even realize was all Town property. So, there's a lot of land out there that is potentially underused, I guess, or could be trailed if we wanted it to be. But then we have to maintain it. Chair Grogan said yes.

Ms. Bemiss said I've spoken with Ms. Hebert about the Joppa Hill, because there was a 20-year thing. So that does come into play, but I'm all in favor of grants. I think we need to apply for anything and everything that we can get our hands on. Ms. Ports said yes. I might need some support and some help because it's a lot of little things, and calls, and we need letters of support. Nothing that's terribly difficult, but if someone can take on a little piece, then it just becomes so much more manageable.

Vice Chair Jones asked To help visualize where we want to put our efforts, would it be possible to have like a layout of the table? These are the grants. These are the areas they would be applicable for, and then potential volunteer opportunities that are related to that grant that you would want support for. Could we have that? Ms. Ports said yes, we could do that. I started a table, and it just didn't come together the way I wanted it to, so I didn't bring it tonight. But, yes, I think that would be... and any other project ideas that you guys have or think about; I have a million ideas. I get a little too carried away, so I'd like to hear what you guys want to see happen.

Vice Chair Jones asked are grants only associated with building and recreation components as opposed to outreach? Ms. Ports replied some grants cover planning. So, for example, one other option would be—I'd have to look and see if this would fly, but with the designation as one of the top ten hiking areas, we actually have a forest stewardship plan at Pulpit Rock. But I'm wondering if we should have a recreation management plan. That would help guide some decisions we need to be making out there. Do we need more parking? Do we need more trails? Do we need to limit? Are there places we should

close? I think all of those are really reasonable questions to be asked. There are also some habitat improvement grants. Those have to be really measurable and clearly beneficial, to be funded. Vice Chair Jones asked is there potential, especially with Riddlebrook? Are there any areas that—because I feel like that's the major body of water that kind of runs through Bedford, and it's in a lot of locations, and I had that one time I found a wood turtle that was near the area. Unfortunately, did not survive. So, we do have species that are worth protecting. Whether they're threatened or not. So, I wonder if there would be anything associated with Riddle Brook. Also, because when I was thinking about outreach, and maybe it could be associated with habitat, invasive species management. Ms. Ports said yes, that is another one. Vice Chair Jones said that, for me, is always at the forefront of my thoughts—Bittersweet, and all the Japanese knotweed—so that's just something that I know I personally want to spend some time on, if that's any way relatable to any grants. Ms. Ports replied yes, there are grants that cover invasive species management as well. I'd have to look into the intricacies. That's, once you start, you can't stop. But I think it's a question worth asking, and that was one of the things we were looking at yesterday at the farm was, if we start to clear out the fencing so that they have access to repair, what does that do to the invasive species that are already there? Is it going to make it worse? Is it going to make it better? It's definitely, we're all thinking about those kinds of things. Do you have a question, Peter?

Mr. Sullivan said yes. You kind of addressed it already, but I was just going to ask about grants for wildlife improvement. That's definitely something I would be interested in, because I know in Town there are some areas where, potentially that's something that I think we could make a good case for. Ms. Ports answered yes, and maybe we could proactively reach out to Fish and Game and find out if they have any goals down here. I should mention I was at Riddlebrook yesterday at Van Loan, and that we found a mesh bag with leaves and rocks in it in the creek. It said, 'scientific experiment, do not mess it up.' And there are several of them, but I don't recall receiving a request for permission or granting permission, so I'll take that back to the Town Manager to find out. Ms. Bemiss asked was there a phone number on it? Ms. Ports said no, and I seem to recall this came up a few years ago when Karen was still here on another system in Town where they were trying to do habitat improvement, but I can't quite grasp what they're trying to do so. It's a little weird.

Ms. Bemiss said one other question then I promise we can move on. You would probably know which trails might be appropriate, but maybe there might be a grant for—do you know the beach buggies that you see at beaches with the big tires? Maybe there might be a grant for that, and the library could put it in there library of things, so, then people could borrow it to go on a hike that might not be accessible via a regular wheelchair. Ms. Ports said yes, that's a great idea. We'd have to think about where—my first thought was the Heritage Trail, that might be nice amenity. Ms. Bemiss asked, have you guys all seen those kinds of wheelchairs that they use at the beach and whatnot? The Board says yes. Ms. Bemiss said just a thought. Ms. Ports said maybe some parts of the farm could use that, but a lot of our trails are pretty rugged, hard to get in—not difficult, but uneven terrain.

VI. Old Business:

1. Updates on previously reviewed permits and ZBA applications

Ms. Ports said back in, I believe it was March, we reviewed the application by the Reeds for a pool within the 50-foot setback. That went to the Zoning Board, and it was approved. You also reviewed an application by Bow Lane, Next Generation LLC, to develop what was called the Shorty's property, and before it went to the Zoning Board, some other issues were raised for them to address. Those have not

been resolved, so, they have not come back to the Planning Department at this point for any further review.

2. CUB Day Report

Chair Grogan said Bill is not here to give us an update on Cub Day, but. I think it went really well. Ms. Ports added it looked like an amazingly successful day.

3. Big Read Grant

Ms. Ports said we're going to make an announcement on that next month. Chair Grogan said OK.

4. Website Content

Ms. Ports said website Content is on my list of things to do. If you have any content that you love and think we should share somehow on the website, just send it to me or put it in a Google Drive folder and we can all start sharing materials, maybe. I have to get all the documentation together before I can set up all the hyperlinks and everything. So, any feedback on invasive species or habitat improvements or other resources that you guys use on a day-to-day basis when you're doing yard work or whatever, would be great.

5. Marston-Dunlap Archaeological Study *(Tabled to nonpublic session)*

VII. Pulpit Rock Subcommittee Report

Ms. Evans said the subcommittee met recently. The discussion mainly centered around the Trails Day that was at the beginning of May, and how we wanted that to be set up. There was some discussion as to whether a sign up would be helpful or not. The committee decided not to go forward with that this time. They wanted to get people there to help as much as possible, and then they were going to allocate people according to their skills once they got there. Ms. Ports, is there anything else that you might add?

Ms. Ports added, they did have a workday on May 6, and they had two crews. So, we have a couple of people in Town who have taken a chainsaw safety certification class. And so, they led two crews to deal with blowdowns. We had quite a few still out there to deal with. And then we had another two or three crews actually. One worked on, if you're walking from the Kennard Trail to the top of the Pulpit, and that is the trail that leads from New Boston Road, and you pass the first long wetland crossing, the next series of bridges are like one long and one short. And either they're not angled right or they're not long enough, and so the first one was reconstructed, and the second one we have the materials, but we didn't complete the work. And if you continue on that trail, I call it the telephone pole bridge, there's actually a bridge out there that the stringers are old telephone poles. The treads are so old that it's like they've shrunk and the spacing in between is really wide. So, that's one of the things they didn't get to. But again, we have the materials and we're going to replace all the treads on the top. And then a couple of other people worked on some re tagging that needed to be done, but there's a pretty good list of work to be done at Pulpit Rock. So, we're hoping to schedule another follow up, at least one or two more workdays this year.

One other thing, you have a staff report on an appointment to the subcommittee. Chair Grogan said yes, we have two. And we will vote on them tonight. So, we have Jim Murray and Dan Kirby. They've been nominated for the Subcommittee.

MOTION: Ms. Evans moved the Conservation Commission appoint Jim Murray to serve as a member of the Pulpit Rock Subcommittee. Ms. Donovan seconded the motion. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. Motion carries.

MOTION: Ms. Evans moved the Conservation Commission appoint Dan Kirby to serve as a member of the Pulpit Rock Subcommittee. Ms. Donovan seconded the motion. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. Motion carries.

Vice Chair Jones said you mentioned telephone poles. Recently someone I work with contacted—in Western Mass—about getting telephone poles to use for their private property. My question is, do telephone poles get used regularly or often anymore on conservation land? Ms. Ports replied I don't think so. These poles were there because there was, before the property was all purchased and consolidated, I guess there was an old line through the property, and so they just sort of took advantage of that and used the material that was there. I think, again, the challenge is just getting that material into a site. It's not on a road. It's just hard to use. I don't know if there's any environmental concerns with using a treated pole. They certainly last a long time. Vice Chair Jones said I just didn't know if it was something we could potentially entertain in the future. For example, if Eversource is somebody who provides old poles that are decommissioned or available, I just didn't know if it would be a plausible choice for us in the future. Ms. Ports said yes, it is, definitely.

Ms. Bemiss said may I interject? Great question, because I had written the same thing. Because I'm wondering if we couldn't have a horse pull in an old telephone pole. Ms. Ports said we probably could. I mean, they use horses to log. If you had a horse trained. Ms. Bemiss said like reverse logging, almost. Ms. Ports said if you had a horse trained for that, maybe. Ms. Bemiss said yes, and Jeff Foote would know if we have any telephone poles that are being decommissioned, that would be the right length for that bridge. Mr. Sullivan said we have some new ones all lining Chubbuck Road. Ms. Bemiss said actually yes, so they'll be getting rid of some there. Ms. Ports said yes, they will be. Ms. Bemiss said so let's... Ms. Ports said use those in Legacy. All right, it's called repurposing. I love it. That's great.

VIII. Trail Stewards Report:

1. National Trails Day - June 4, 2023 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Chair Grogan said so, Kathleen, you're offering some programming and recognition on National Trails Day? Ms. Ports said yes. June 3rd is National Trails Day, which is a nationwide event that honors our local trail champions, including our Bedford trail stewards. So, we have a couple of things on the Parks and Rec website for registration. It's a little undetailed, because I was trying to get it on there before the Parks and Rec Department Chair went on vacation. So, they're more like placeholders, but on June 4th at 2:00 PM, there is a guided walk at Pulpit Rock leaving from Pulpit Road parking lot and travelling to Gages Mill. That will be hosted by Dave Butler, who is a trail steward and a wealth of knowledge at interpreting forests and their histories, and really fun to spend the afternoon within the field. And then on the 7th, which is a Wednesday morning, at 10:00 AM, there are no library programs that week. So, if you have toddlers and want to get out at the Bedford Village Common, Joe Hendry, who is an environmental educator will be here, and we're doing a 3D rainbow of natural occurring items. And then all week the week of June 4th Grant Killian, his daughter, Freya, who often attends our Conservation Commission meeting, had this wonderful idea that we should challenge people to do her favorite hike, which is to start at New Boston Road and walk 4 miles to the farm. And a lot of people don't realize you can do that. So, Grant used to, I guess, organize orienteering races and has all the

orienteering equipment. So, we're going to install small little orienteering stations with flags, and they have their own unique stamp on them. And so you will get a card, and you will stamp the card as you go through the stations. You can do as many or as few as you want, and then you can either submit the card at the farm or if you're not doing the whole walk, you can take a picture of yourself and your group with the card and you will be entered to win a raffle prize. So, we are looking for raffle prizes. We have some awesome raffle prizes already, including some gift certificates to some local stores, the farm store. So, if you want to solicit a donation from someone or offer a donation or a raffle item to the raffle, the more the merrier. It can be small, a \$5 coupon or home baked bread or whatever you want it to be, just saying. And so, all of those programs are on the Parks and Rec website. There's no fee. So, a lot of times when you register for a program with no fee, it will tell you you're not registered, but you are. Just be aware of that. So, that's the plan. Chair Grogan said OK, good plan.

IX. Announcements:

1. Pulpit Rock Subcommittee will meet on August 23 at 55 Constitution Drive at 6:30PM.

Chair Grogan said Pulpit Rock subcommittee will be meeting August 23rd at 6:30 at the Police Training Room at 55 Constitution Avenue. And I understand we are going into a nonpublic session. Ms. Ports said we are. Yes, I just forgot about the certificate in front of you. Would you be willing to mention that? Chair Grogan said so, I have a certificate. If you're watching, Ben Berman. I have an award for Ben Berman for clearing and tagging the Chesterfield cut off snowshoe Trail at Legacy Park, on behalf of the Bedford Commission, a Certificate of Appreciation. Ms. Ports said thank you, Ben. Board members said thank you, Ben. Chair Grogan said and you will see that he gets that. Ms. Ports said I will.

2. Bedford will be celebrating National Trails Day on June 4, 2023, 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Several programs will be available. Please check the Parks and Recreation page for details and free registration.

X. Non-Public Session:

Per RSA 91-A:3, II(d) for consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community.

MOTION made by Ms. Bemiss to go into nonpublic session per RSA 91-A:3, II(d) for consideration of the acquisition, sale or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community. Ms. Donovan duly seconded the motion. Roll Call vote taken: Mr. Sullivan Ms. Evans, Ms. Donovan, Ms. Bemiss, Chair Grogan, Vice Chair Jones, and Ms. Smith all voted in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

The Commission moves to nonpublic session.

The public portion of the meeting ended at 8:13 p.m.

XI. Adjourn

MOTION was made by to leave nonpublic session at pm seconded the motion. Roll Call vote taken: Mr. Sullivan Ms. Donovan, Ms. Evans, Ms. Bemiss, Mr. Clough, Chair Grogan, Vice Chair Carter, Mr. Killian, Vice Chair Jones all voted in favor. Motion carried.

MOTION to adjourn was made by at pm. M duly seconded the motion. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.

The next meeting will be held on June 27, 2023.

Respectfully submitted by Sue Forcier