

# **Town of Bedford**

## **Conservation Commission Minutes**

### **July 25, 2023**

A meeting of the Bedford Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, July 25, at the BCTV meeting room at 10 Meetinghouse Road, Bedford. Present: Patricia Grogan (Chair), Stephanie Jones (Vice Chair), Joanne Smith (alternate), Peter Sullivan (member), Kathleen Bemiss (Town Council alternate member), Deborah Evans (member), William Carter (Town Council Representative), Brian Labrie (alternate member), Grant Killian (alternate member), Julie Donovan (member), Kathleen Ports (Associate Planner). Absent: Stephen Clough (Planning Board representative).

#### **I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Grogan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., initiated Board introductions, offered congratulations to Ms. Jones in her new role as Vice Chair, and welcomed new alternate member Brian Labrie. Ms. Ports reviewed the agenda and stated the Dredge and Fill Application and the first item on New Business have been postponed to the next meeting.

**II. Approval of Minutes:** May 23, 2023 Meeting and Non-public sessions: January 24, 2023, March 28, 2023 and May 23, 2023

#### **III. Dredge and Fill Applications:**

1. **Hakan and Medine Onan** - Review of a request for an expedited minimum impact wetland permit for permanent impacts to 740 s.f. of forested wetland for construction of a driveway serving a new lot resulting from a proposed subdivision of the parent lot at 7 Hamilton Way, Lot 27-17-1 in the R&A. *(Postponed to the next meeting).*

#### **IV. New Business:**

1. **McCarthy Family Revocable Trust / Shaun Oparowski and Molly Ann McCarthy Trustees** - Request for a variance for an in-ground pool within 29 feet of the edge of wetland where 50 feet is required at 59 Whippoorwill Lane, Lot 1-75-15, zoned R&A. *(Postponed to the next meeting).*
2. **Jordan Meisner and Bethany Kacich** - Request for approval to retain a private bridge mistakenly constructed on Town-owned lands at Benedictine Park.

#### **V. Old Business:**

1. Updates on previously reviewed permits and ZBA applications
2. Big Read Grant
3. RTP Grant Application

4. Marston-Dunlap Archaeological Study Results (*will be discussed in nonpublic session*).

#### **VI. Pulpit Rock Subcommittee Report**

#### **VII. Trail Stewards Report**

#### **VIII. Announcements:**

1. **Bedford Hollow** – The Fairy House Trail will officially open on August 1st. A story walk and trail maps will be available to guide you to the trail from Muller Park. It is not too late for residents, businesses, and other organizations to participate. Contact the Planning Department for more information.

#### **IX. 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.

Mr. Carter read the Mission Statement:

The mission of the Bedford, NH Conservation Commission is to protect, preserve and conserve the Town's natural resources and open space land for a common good. This includes stewardship and management of conservation lands, protecting wetlands and vernal pools, and the planning and acquisition of land for conservation purposes. The Commission works with landowners to administer State and Town wetland regulations and advises other boards such as the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment on environmental impacts and alternate considerations regarding development projects. The Conservation Commission promotes conservation activities and communicates with the citizens of Bedford on important environmental issues. Our motto: *Keeping Bedford Beautiful*.

- II. **Approval of Minutes** – May 23, 2023 Meeting and Nonpublic sessions: January 24, 2023, March 28, 2023 and May 23, 2023.

**MOTION: Vice Chair Jones moved to approve the May 23, 2023 meeting minutes. Ms. Donovan seconded the motion. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. Mr. Carter and Mr. Labrie both abstained from the vote. Motion carries.**

**MOTION: Vice Chair Jones moved to approve the nonpublic meeting minutes for the January 24<sup>th</sup>, March 28<sup>th</sup> and May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023 meetings. Ms. Evans seconded the motion. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. Mr. Carter and Mr. Labrie both abstained from the vote. Motion carries.**

#### **IV. New Business:**

1. **Jordan Meisner and Bethany Kacich** - Request for approval to retain a private bridge mistakenly constructed on Town-owned lands at Benedictine Park.

Chair Grogan said we have an applicant here if you want to please step forward and introduce yourself.

**Mr. Jordan Meisner of 35 Church Road, Bedford, presents:** Nice to meet everybody. My name is Jordan Meisner. I will briefly introduce myself and then get to this little presentation. I have a proposal for you all. To introduce myself, my name is Jordan Meisner. I moved here along with my wife and daughter. They may be joining in a little bit. They were a little bit delayed. We moved here about a year ago in June of last year. We love living here. We love our home. We live just like a walk away on Church Road. Our property abuts Benedictine Park, and we love that. We love the park. We loved it so much that we wanted better access to it. Oh, there they are. That's my wife, Beth and my daughter, Grace who is also in the photo.

Riddle Brook sort of cuts a path between our property and Benedictine Park. I made a pretty silly, but honest, mistake thinking that the brook was on our property. I obviously should have done my homework. I thought that the park line started like where the open space ends, like basically where the tree line starts, but it's not. It's set back. Where our property is on the on the east side. Our property line runs on the east side of the brook, and the park is to the west. So, we built a bridge over the brook to get better access to the park which we love going to. And then we received the letter that very reasonably said, hey, you can't do that. That's not on your land. And I was like oh darn, maybe there's something I can do. I had e-mail correspondence with Kathleen, who recommended that I come here and talk to you today to see if we can keep it. Obviously, we understand if we can't.

Why should we be able to keep it? Obviously, it shouldn't just be for our benefit if we're going to keep this. It's on public land. I do honestly think that the public would benefit from it, and I think it's in fitting with the mission statement I just heard and the motto I just heard. It would be accessible to the general public. There's a little worn footpath/deer path that was there when we moved there. And so, people can kind of just walk out of one of the corners of the park and walk down this little trail. It's not long. I meant to measure it before coming here. I think it's probably like 250 feet or something like that before you get to this little bridge that you see a photo of here. Yeah, we think it's minimally disturbing to the soils and vegetation. It's well constructed, safe, and it's an enjoyable place, I think, to walk to and spend a few minutes sort of taking in the scene around you. We enjoy it. People have already used it. We see people walking down and kind of walking to the bridge. That's great. We don't want him to come all the way like to our house just for privacy's sake. But I'm glad that other people are enjoying it, and I hope that they can continue to.

This is just a map. I probably wasn't doing a great job of explaining exactly what's going on there, but our parcel is here. I don't know if you can see my mouse moving. There's our house and there's this pond here and it connects to Riddle Brook. So, I thought that our line was like up this way. Obviously, it's not and so that little red line is that worn foot trail that I mentioned, and the green marker is where the bridge is.

There's a picture of the trail I just mentioned. I think what's charming about Benedictine Park to begin with is there's kind of like nooks and crannies, and like little walking paths that are there, and I think that this is another one, and this could add to it really. Oh. It says June of 2021. It should be 2022. Not that that's important. But I think that we could also, as I say on the second bullet point, we can improve accessibility by adding a sign or I don't know any anything else that anybody might think of that might make it more visible and useful to the public. Also, I'm willing to do any and all maintenance or defray any costs associated with it. I would love to be able to keep it so anything that we can do to make that happen, I'd love to hear.

More about the bridge itself: I've listed the materials here. It's made out of wood, wood screws, metal brackets, water-based stain. It definitely stays clear of the brook even when there's really heavy rain,

which obviously we've had lately. So, it's a nice bridge. I hope we can use it. I hope we can keep it. If not, you know, we get it. We didn't have a right to build it in the first place. That's it.

Chair Grogan said I agree, it's a nice bridge. I love what you did. Being that it's accessible to the public, the only problem that I have is the liability to the Town. If there's a way, we can talk and make it safer. I mean, maybe railings on the side. I don't know what would be... Mr. Meisner asked could I purchase an insurance policy on it and take and list the Town as a further insured? I would be willing to do that. Mr. Carter replied it's Town property, so it's already insured. But the liability, if somebody should be hurt, is the Town liability. Mr. Meisner said yes, I understand. Would I be able to financially contribute to the Town to help take out an insurance policy on it?

Ms. Evans said but don't we already have open bridges like at Pulpit Rock and various other places that don't have railings or anything on them. Ms. Ports added if we accept it the infrastructure, I'd have to look at the standard in terms of the clearance. It is a little high, so it might warrant a railing. Ms. Jones said well that was going to be a couple of my questions is what homework did you do prior to constructing it? I was just curious about that in terms of the design and what resources you used. Mr. Meisner replied yeah, I'll be honest. I didn't physically construct it. It was an employee of ours along with one of his friends who has done this sort of thing before. They constructed it. And like I said, they've had experience doing this. I asked him about the materials he used, but I didn't ask more than that. I guess I should have. I could get that information. Vice Chair Jones said it was more just general curiosity because I also wanted to know what PLC's response was to the design. Ms. Ports said they did not express a concern about the design. Chair Grogan said they did express the liability, though. Ms. Ports said yeah, but I don't know that their point is, I think that what they're saying is that, if we're going to keep it, we need to be comfortable with it as a structure. And so I don't think the liability, like the Town would take on the liability. It's a recreational facility, so the liability—I can explain that another time, but the State waives most liability for recreational use on Town properties. So, there's not really a liability risk. It's sort of this known, use at your own risk. Mr. Carter said I haven't been out there—the accessibility—is it easy to get to? Yes, you walk up to it. I see rocks in front of it. Obviously you mentioned that you want to, if this path that needs to be done, because that is really what you're opening up that whole area to anyone that wants to come through there. Mr. Meisner replied yeah, it already is quite accessible and that's I think why we see people using it already. I see people walking their dogs now in there all the time, and deer use the path. I saw a turkey on it just before I came here. So yeah, it's accessible. Mr. Carter joked; do they pay taxes? Ms. Bemis added I was going to say, can you put up a turkey crossing sign? Mr. Carter added maybe the bears will use it too one of these days. Accessibility—that's the key thing. Reading some of the notes is that, once people start using it, then they're going through your property, basically. Mr. Meisner replied well, no. The bridge isn't, I mean, there's still... Mr. Carter asked the path is not on your property? Mr. Meisher said no. Let me go back to the map. Ms. Evans asked I think both ends of the bridge are not on your property, are they? Mr. Meisner replied correct. Yeah, It's hard to see. This is the tree line of the park itself. And then it's this very well-worn foot path that goes down to the brook and then if you keep going, you go onto our property. We do have it posted there. I have seen people come onto our property. It's not a big deal. I'd prefer people wouldn't but I'm totally comfortable with that.

Mr. Carter stated so, crossing the bridge brings them just on the other side of the brook. Mr. Meisner replied yes. It's still probably 10 yards away from our line. Mr. Carter continued OK, so basically, once they cross that bridge, they're just turning around and going back. Mr. Meisner said yes, so, I'm not going to say that this is like some big trail. Like I said, it's probably like 250 feet down. It's, more of like a charming little nook to the park, of which there are several in Benedictine, which we kind of enjoy exploring when we go there. Yeah, but it's not like a proper trail.

Ms. Ports said in your packets, you did receive an overview map which sort of zooms out a little bit and shows that, we're talking about this very southeast corner of the park. So, most people are parking here and accessing this area. It's a bit of a journey. Mr. Meisner said that's the opening and I could open it up more with permission, obviously, from whomever I would need permission for to make it. But it is pretty accessible. That photo is sort of hard to see.

Mr. Carter asked, and we did have something from our Trail Stewards about what it would mean or what it would take to make this a quote unquote proper path or trail? Ms. Ports replied I think that their thought was that it's not apparent, so it probably won't get used unless there's additional trail work done or additional signage and that the rocks are kind of wet and slippery, and so they weren't sure how much water access it would provide. Mr. Meisner asked which rocks? Ms. Ports replied in the creek channel on the upstream side. Ms. Evans said I assume it's mainly used by people who want to walk down and look at Riddle Brook. Ms. Ports asked at the river? Ms. Evans replied yes.

Vice Chair Jones said I had a question. This might be a question for the Trail Stewards or PLC. In terms of erosion, because I was reading depending on the design, if it's not designed in an efficient manner—not that I'm necessarily saying because I know nothing about designs, I'm just reading about—bridges on streams like that can cause bank erosion. So, I was just curious if that was a topic that was discussed when PLC was involved, or even just the Trail Stewards. Because I know that that would be a concern just because I don't know anything about the design itself. Ms. Ports replied I went out and looked at it last week and after the big storms, it did seem like the near side on that photo that you're seeing in front of you, that there might have been some washing around the end. It's really hard to tell. It might be a little short on that side. Vice Chair Jones said so that would be a concern of mine. That's with all the changes in storms, so it's not like necessarily the design itself, but what's happening around it. But it might exacerbate the erosion. That's not my background, but I think it's something to bring up in regard to this.

Ms. Bemiss said first, I think you did a great job. Back in my day, albeit myself, we would have just put a 2 by 4 and called it a bridge and hope for the best. So, this is much better than we would have done. Where it begins and ends on town property, originally, I thought it started on your property and ended on Town property, which makes it different. The only concern I have is erosion.

Ms. Evans asked Ms. Ports, you said that you thought there might be some erosion from the recent storms. Have you looked at any of our other bridges? Is this a common problem or is this like Stephanie was implying it might be specific? I'm sorry I'm putting you on the spot. Ms. Ports replied it's OK. I'm trying to think. I haven't been out. I've been on a few properties, but the ones I've been on don't have, I mean actually, the Riddle Brook during the storm, our Riddle Brook crossing at Van Loan, the water was up to that bridge because it's sagging so much. But that's a slightly different situation, I think, there. I don't think we've had any issues on Legacy. I have an active Trail Steward there and they haven't reported anything. So, I think those structures have been fine.

Vice Chair Jones said the other thing that I made a note about was I understand that there are other locations where people have footpaths. They've come from their property, the abutters, to Benedictine. As this the only structure that has been created, what is the likelihood that future structures are created? Is this a pattern? Or is it just a one off? That's something that I think should be considered as well—not to be negative or to say that it shouldn't be there. It's just, is that going to now start a trend where other abutters are going to start creating their own structures to give them their personal leeway to the property? Mr. Meisner replied yeah, I get it. I wish I had just come and proposed the bridge to begin with

as like a real project. Because I understand it's now, it seems like oh, I just did it and I'm, yeah. I get the precedent. I'm just hoping. Mr. Carter stated that would have been a good Boy Scout project for someone. Chair Grogan asked maybe we can get the Eagle Scouts to put safe railings on the sides—just wood or something? Because that looks like quite a drop to me if a kid dropped. Ms. Ports said you could make it a condition of your approval. Chair Grogan said yes, you did a great job on it, but I would like to see it safer, that's all. Mr. Meisner replied we can do any of that. I mean, the guy who built it, he's a full-time employee of ours. He does all the groundskeeping and it allows him to keep an eye on stuff like this. So, I'm sure he could add railings. He could keep an eye on the erosion. I mean, I understand that that's just sort of yeah, but that's not necessarily something contractual, I'm saying, but we keep an eye on it. We would definitely be very interested in maintaining it and making sure it was safe and not contributing to erosion.

Chair Grogan said so we could do that with the condition. Mr. Carter added I think it would be one railing. We don't need railings on both sides, just a railing on one side just to allow somebody to grab something as they're walking along if they needed to. Ms. Ports said I think that the Commission should also consider a condition to maintain the trail access and potentially fund a sign. Vice Chair Jones added that's what I was thinking. A compromise. Maybe the signage will help make it make it evident that it's part of the Town property now. And, obviously, or I shouldn't say obviously, it seems like most abutters know that they're not necessarily going to be building structures, so maybe the compromise is the signage, and it stays and therefore, it becomes just a part of Benedictine Park. Mr. Meisner replied sounds great to me. Anything I can do to make that happen.

Chair Grogan said maybe hold off with the signage for the public till we get the safety measures done. Vice Chair Jones said well, I think the signage would be on us at that point to be consistent. Mr. Carter added that's our signage. Ms. Bemiss added, and I guess I would just want some direction from PLC more than us saying let's check for erosion, what not. What are their parameters? Ms. Ports replied I can ask someone to look at the size and make sure it's an appropriate size.

Vice Chair Jones asked so, can that be Tabled then or? Ms. Evans said I think we could vote on it with the conditions. Mr. Carter replied yes. The key here is that this is a one-off and that if you are looking at doing this, that your first step isn't to do it and then come in front of the Commission. It is to reach out to the Planning staff and say this is what I'm thinking of doing. So that's the part that we need to make sure, because once you do this once, you've set pretty much a precedent that they could always say, well, I didn't know. Well, how do we make sure that they know that this is a great thing that's being done and get some enjoyment of it, but we just want to make, as you as someone said, we don't want this to be... If there's five or six of these being built, and next thing you know, they're all over the place. And that's the key right there. So, do we have a proposed motion? Chair Grogan replied no, we need to make one. Mr. Carter said I think there was one was in the packet.

Ms. Ports stated the boundary line is flagged and tagged. Vice Chair Jones added I would like to just mention the GIS portion of the Town's website is extremely user-friendly and it would be a good way for residents to check their property lines as well if they want to use that resource as well. Because that is available. Ms. Ports said yes, that's a guidance, but it's not a definitive survey. Ms. Bemiss asked may I make one other comment though? Regardless of whether the wetland is on your property or not, you should still be coming before this Board, if I'm correct, because you're altering the wetland? Ms. Ports replied if the bridge is stream bank to stream bank and there's no work in the channel or there's no work in an adjacent wetland, it doesn't require a permit from the State. And so, typically, we would not review a bridge proposal like that. Ms. Bemiss asked but anybody can come to the Planning Department, meet

with you and Becky and just ask any questions. Ms. Ports replied yes. There is a simple permit process for trails called a permit by notification, which is a pretty streamlined review, and low-cost, just to cover yourself.

Mr. Carter asked what were the two conditions to be added to the motion? Vice Chair Jones replied signage. Chair Grogan said the railings, erosion. Mr. Carter said OK. Ms. Ports asked and the Conservation Commission is willing to pay for these signs? Ms. Evans asked how many signs are we doing? We'd only need one, wouldn't we? Ms. Ports replied I think you'd need more than one. There's not much reason to walk to that corner of the property. So, we could update the map and show it on the map. But when you get to the parking lot, most people would never know that there was a trail over there. So, you might want some sort of secondary sign as you walk into the... like if you're on the Perimeter Trail, that says trail below or trail with an arrow or something. So, maybe two, and they're not that expensive, maybe \$20-\$25 each. Mr. Carter said I'll make a motion. Alright, so let me make sure I get everything right. Ms. Bemiss said welcome to small town politics. Your first experience—we're always looking for Board members. Mr. Killian said I'd encourage you to consider mountain bike trails for your next creativity. Mr. Carter said All right, well, let's take a stab at this and if someone needs to modify it...

**MOTION: Mr. Carter moves that we allow this bridge that has been constructed in Benedictine Park, to stay with the following conditions that:**

- 1. The applicant works with the Town staff to put railings that are appropriate and will work out a plan that we can monitor any erosion due to these storms that might cause an issue with that bridge and that the signage should be decided.**
- 2. The applicant shall maintain the bridge and the small walking trail, working with Town staff. If the trail is not maintained, there is no longer a purpose for the bridge.**
- 3. If the applicant should sell his property, that bridge should be removed from the property.**

**Ms. Evans seconded the motion.**

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Ms. Bemiss asked in the motion it says that the responsibility is on the applicant, but should he sell his house in a year, then who's responsibility does that become? Mr. Carter replied true. I would believe, since we are accepting it to be on Town property, that I would imagine the Conservation Commission would accept that become as part of the trail maintenance. Ms. Bemiss said so I think I would like more clarity on that, then. Because I think it becomes gray and if there's no history, it will get lost. Ms. Ports said I think that the agreement ends upon sale or transition of the property. Mr. Carter replied there you go. That's even more black and white right there, yes. Ms. Bemiss asked can we add that into the motion please? Mr. Carter replied, and the third condition would be if the applicant should sell his property, that bridge gets pulled off of where it is. If the applicant sells his property, that bridge being maintained by the applicant it is removed from that spot. Ms. Evans asked, what are the relative costs of maintaining it versus pulling it out when we've already signed it? Ms. Ports replied it would depend if this becomes the destination of Benedictine Park, we will have some conversation. But I highly doubt that, and I don't honestly think it's going to warrant long-term maintenance. Ms. Evans said OK, fair enough. Ms. Donovan added the person that buys the house might not want the bridge, so it's best to remove it beforehand and

it is not part of the sale. [crosstalk] Mr. Carter said so basically, it's the responsibility of the homeowner, when they move, that that bridge does get pulled up. Mr. Meisher said I agree because I think it does bring people kind of within eyesight, eye-line and some people might not want that. So, I could totally see people not wanting that. So, I think it probably makes sense to just take it down if we move. Ms. Bemiss said take it with you. Mr. Carter said he's got a young baby and another one on the way. I'm sure that he's going to be here for quite a long time. Mr. Meisner said that's the plan. Mr. Carter said and you moved here because of the schools. Mr. Meisner added among other things.

Mr. Carter said so that's the motion. We have a second with those three conditions. I'll turn it back over to you since you are the Chair. Chair Grogan said OK. So, yes, we have we have a second, all good, OK.

**Vote taken: ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. Motion carries.**

Mr. Meisner said thank you. Ms. Ports said so, Jordan, I'll be in touch. Mr. Meisner said yeah, OK. So, my communication about the railing and all that stuff you'll be my point of contact, OK. Mr. Carter said we've turned you over to the Planning staff to move this forward. Ms. Bemiss said may I just interject one other thing. You live in the Historic District as well, so there are lots of rules and regulations for that. But they're also looking for volunteers on that committee, so feel free. Ms. Ports said we are actively looking for Commission members and I am actually the new liaison to that committee. Mr. Meisner said alright, we'll talk about that too. Ms. Bemiss said we'd love to have you or your wife. Mr. Carter said there's another condition, right? Mr. Meisner said thank you all very much. Nice meeting you.

## **V. Old Business:**

### **1. Updates on previously reviewed permits and ZBA applications**

Chair Grogan said now we're going into old business. Kathleen, do you have updates? Ms. Ports replied I do. In January, and I might have updated you on this, but I sort of lost track so I'm going to go all the way back to the beginning of the year. In January, the Commission recommended approval of a request for an open-air deck conversion to an enclosed porch on Elk Drive, and that variance was granted by the Zoning Board in February.

In May, you recommended approval for an in-ground pool within 41.4 feet of the edge of wetland on Spring Hill Road, and that was also granted by the Zoning Board. Also in May, the Commission recommended approval of the request from Bow Lane Next Generation to construct retaining walls 6 feet or higher within the wetland setback, as well as an underground vault within the wetland setback, and that too, it was slightly modified, but it was also approved by the Zoning Board last month. In May, the Board approved 3 requests for fund expenditures. We completed a bulk order of wood and hardware, and all the materials are now stored at the Department of Public Works maintenance garage, and we are starting to schedule our project. So, the lead volunteer will come retrieve their wood, do the work at cutting and everything at their house and then we'll schedule the assembly in the field. And the new sign order was placed. We ended up changing the font a little bit because they were only two inches high, and I just didn't feel like that was big enough. So, now the letters are three inches high. They're a little bit more rounded and obvious, and I'm hoping that those are ready at the end of this week. And Richard Moore, who's the chair of the Pulpit Rock subcommittee, will coordinate the installation of those new signs.



Mr. Carter asked when you get those signs, could you just take a picture of one and maybe e-mail it out to the Commission, please? Ms. Ports replied absolutely. Yes, you bet. OK. That's all I have on previously reviewed permits and applications.

## 2. Big Read Grant

Chair Grogan asked any news on the Big Read Grant? Ms. Ports said yes. In January, the Public Library asked the Conservation Commission to partner on a grant application for the Big Read project, and I'm going to read you a little bit of the press release, so you get a better context of what I'm talking about. So, the Library and the Conservation Commission, in partnership with New Hampshire Humanities, will support a statewide NEA, Big Read of *The Bear*, by Andrew Krivak, between September and October this fall. The initiative of the NEA, in partnership with Arts Midwest, a Big Read broadens our understanding of the world, our communities and ourselves through the power of a shared reading experience. In partnership with the Center for the Book at the New Hampshire State Library, New Hampshire State Council of Arts, Department of Corrections, 50 local libraries, scholars, the McAuliffe Shepard Discovery Center, and Gibson's Bookstore in Concord. the Big Read will bring more than 5,000 Granite Staters together to discuss a selected book, *The Bear*.

*The Bear* offers readers an opportunity to join an unimaginable journey into a world familiar and unknown, as we consider what future we want for New Hampshire. Set in the post-apocalyptic future, it is the story of the last two people on Earth, a father and daughter, that explores powerful themes about the importance of intergenerational storytelling, our complicated relationship with the environment and how to prepare for an unknown future. With a home in Jaffrey, Andrew Krivak has shared how Mount Monadnock inspired the book setting, making the bear a timely local choice for our read. The library will host two book discussions and is co-sponsoring with the Commission several other events. Those include a black bear presentation at the library on Wednesday, September 13th in the evening. There will be a live animal demonstration program at 11:00 o'clock and at 12:30 on Saturday, October 21st at the library and there will be a sky watch at Benedictine Park on November 6th. And then there will also, like I said, be additional book readings. And then there are also statewide events, including a public kick-off on September 6, a virtual discussion about other post-apocalyptic books. Let's see, a planetarium show with McAuliffe Shepard Discovery Museum, and a poet, Midge Goldberg, will examine how poets have told stories about the night sky throughout human history. And I have read the book. I am not a post-apocalyptic genre reader, but I highly enjoyed it. And it's a quick and easy read and you can listen to it. I don't know if you know this. You can download audiobooks from our public Library for free. And you can listen to it that way, but they are also going to be receiving over 40 copies of the book. So, you can sign up to be part of the book discussion and get a free copy of the book. And then all programs you can register for at the library and we would love to have a presence of the Conservation Commission at these events, whether you're like, sort of cohosting, directing traffic, or just enjoying the experience. I will send out the dates and so please let me know if you're available to attend. Chair Grogan said OK. Thank you. Ms. Ports said that's kind of one of our commitments is to help staff. Hope to see you there.

Ms. Bemiss asked how much was the grant for? Ms. Ports replied I honestly don't know. I really don't know. Ms. Bemiss said great job, though. Ms. Ports said I'm excited. We had really great feedback on the application. They thought this was a really unique partnership so, that was good, and they love the programming that we were offering too. Ms. Evans said and live animals? Bears? Ms. Ports said yes, it couldn't be better. Mr. Carter said we already have that in Town. Ms. Evans said well, I know, but not in the library, normally. Ms. Ports said there won't be a live bear. Mr. Carter said we have those. Ms. Ports said I know, right? We had one in our front yard two weeks ago. Mr. Sullivan said just put up some bird

feeders, they'll come. Ms. Ports said we should not be feeding the birds in the summer when bears eat the food. Just saying. Chair Grogan asked are there any other questions for Kathleen?

### 3. RTP Grant Application

Chair Grogan said OK, the RTP Grant? Ms. Ports said so, I should have brought a little bit more information on the Recreational Trails Grant Program. It's a federal program. The State awards funds every year. It's a 10 percent match and you can match using soft money or cash. So, it's a great grant to pursue. There are several new Buy America clauses that the program is struggling to implement. And so, it was an ideal year to submit a request for a parking lot which doesn't involve Buy America materials. So, we submitted an application for a new parking area at the Marston Dunlap property, which the Conservation Commission acquired at the end of 2021. Do you guys want to see a little aerial of what we're talking about? So, I spoke with the grant administrator today. He wanted some clarification on our cost, and I will get that to him by the end of Friday. We will find out in the fall whether or not we were awarded the grant, and it would be implemented next year between June and December, and we would work with Department of Public Works as well. The grant would pay for the design and the implementation or the construction of the parking area. So, this is the area where we cleared all that debris from the fallen barn. This right here—it's hard to tell, but this is the brown barn that's still there where we all sort of park when we want to access the property. And this is the 1820 original homestead—not original but 1820 homestead—that is still on the Marcia Marston Trust land. I will note that there is an auction happening at this property. It's online, and there are some amazing historic artifacts being sold. It would be so nice if the Historic Society or the Town could acquire some of those items. But it's fun to look at. Ms. Bemiss asked what's the auction site? Is it Smith? The same one that did... Ms. Ports replied no, it's not. I'll send you guys the link. Ms. Evans asked can I ask how many parking spaces there'll be? Ms. Ports replied we are proposing 10 parking spaces. There will be 1 handicap space and we also are proposing a little pull-out area so that if we wanted to add a picnic table or interpretive panels that were also handicap accessible, that we could do that. And we included that in the cost—the bump out. We did not include the cost of the interpretive panels, I don't think. I'd have to check, yeah. Any other questions? There were no questions.

### 4. Marston-Dunlap Archaeological Study Results *(will be discussed in the nonpublic session)*.

## VI. Pulpit Rock Subcommittee Report

Chair Grogan asked Deborah, do you have a report on the Pulpit Rock Subcommittee? Ms. Evans replied I do. The Public Rock Subcommittee met on May the 6th, 2023, for its annual spring workday. Sixteen volunteers removed downed trees, replaced a 24-foot bridge, repaired other bridges, removed debris and litter, and checked existing trail markers for replacement where needed. In June, Kathleen was contacted by a representative of the 20s and 30s Trail Group of the New Hampshire Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club, expressing their interest in doing trail work at the Pulpit Rock Conservation Area. On July the first, Richie Holstein, Trails Co-Chair of the New Hampshire Chapter, and Bedford Trails Steward, worked with the crew to relocate a section of the Scouting Way Trail to higher and drier ground. The crew did amazing and challenging work that has functioned well during the past few rainstorms. The subcommittee hopes to get the Trails Group's assistance again in the fall to finish the project. While the AMC crew concentrated on Scouting Way, a crew of nine Town volunteers addressed issues on the Campbell and Kennard Trails, including replacing treads on a crossing on the Kennard Trail and adding a crossing at an area of chronic flooding on the Campbell Trail. The sign order the Commission approved in May should be ready for pick up this week and the next big task for the subcommittee will be replacement of the signs.

The next meeting for the subcommittee will be on August the 23rd, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. Thank you. Chair Grogan asked are there any questions for Deborah? There were no questions.

#### **VII. Trail Stewards Report:**

Chair Grogan said Kathleen, you hired an intern. Ms. Ports replied I did. Chair Grogan said tell us about him. Ms. Ports said his name is Chris Scholes. He is a Bedford resident. He's lived here, I think, his whole life. He's a student at PSU and he's studying environmental science and he dreams of working for AMC and building trails. And so, when we interviewed him, you could just see his visible excitement about the position. So, he's been a great fit. He's working independently and we're trying to give him some exposure to a lot of different tasks, including some of the more mundane things. He's eager to build a bridge. So, he's happy that the wood order is in. That will be part of his projects coming up. And then I'm also hoping to work with him to finish up some of the kiosk updates that we had talked about in the past and haven't finished yet. He's great. Chair Grogan asked are there any questions for Kathleen? There were no questions.

#### **VIII. Announcements:**

1. **Bedford Hollow** – The Fairy House Trail will officially open on August 1st. A story walk and trail maps will be available to guide you to the trail from Muller Park. It is not too late for residents, **businesses**, and other organizations to participate. Contact the Planning Department for more information.

On the trail stewards, the other thing I might mention is that we have been extremely busy getting the Fairy House Trail ready. We had over 20 submissions including just some amazing, amazing, structures that are really heavy. I'm hoping that everyone is excited about it as we are and that it's a hit and I just would reiterate that the long-term goal is for it to grow and expand and that we would love to see the business community get engaged and maybe replicate their businesses in our new village called Bedford Hollow.

Chair Grogan asked so that Fairy House Trail is going to officially open August, the 1<sup>st</sup>, correct? Ms. Ports replied yes. Chair Grogan continued a story walk and trail maps will be available to guide you through Muller Park, parking area located at 88 North Amherst. This is a woodland trail that's easy grade, but is natural dirt trail with some small ditches, roots and rocks. The trail is expected to evolve over time, and if you did not have time to submit a house, you can add a house to the trail. Where do we take it? Ms. Ports replied there'll be materials on site so you can build a house while you're out there. Or you could build a house and bring it to the site and add it wherever you... Chair Grogan said what a great thing for the kids! Ms. Ports said yes. So, we're doing the initial installations, to just give the example. There'll be a story walk that explains how it works and what kinds of materials the fairies like their homes to be constructed of. Chair Grogan asked have you seen a fairy yet? Ms. Ports said we do have standards. I will say that ... Ms. Bemiss added there are covenants. Ms. Ports continued it is a little bit in there, but it's a really neat spot. So, I just hope that people will venture out. Chair Grogan said all residents, businesses and local organizations are invited to participate. You can also contact Kathleen at the Planning Department.

**IX. 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 Vice Chair Jones 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. Mr. Carter duly seconded the motion. Roll Call vote taken: Ms. Smith, Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Bemiss, Ms. Evans, Mr. Carter, Chair Grogan, Vice Chair Jones, Mr. Labrie, Mr. Killian, and Ms. Donovan all voted in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.**

The Commission moves to nonpublic session.

The public portion of the meeting ended at 7:50 p.m.

**X. Adjourn**

**MOTION was made by to leave nonpublic session at pm seconded the motion. Roll Call vote taken: Ms. Smith, Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Bemiss, Ms. Evans, Mr. Carter, Chair Grogan, Vice Chair Jones, Mr. Labrie, Mr. Killian, and Ms. Donovan all voted in favor. Unanimous. 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 August 22, 2023.

Respectfully submitted by Sue Forcier