

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of October 16, 2021 Peacham Town Gym

Called to order at 11:01 Saturday

In attendance: Commission members-David Stauffer, Marilyn Magnus, Ron Miller, Neil Monteith Tree Warden Ex-officio. Absent- David Magnus  
Public: Wendy Mackenzie, Bruce MacLean and Carol Fox.

Per town gym rules everyone signed a Covid liability waiver and wore a mask.

Projects ongoing: Maintenance of Town Forest, Peacham Pathways, Mill Creek Park, Roller barn area, acreage at Devil's Hill Trailhead. The Roller barn area needs some backhoe work to dig up metal garbage and stumps with iron embedded in them. New signage will be forthcoming for the Town Forest and Mill Creek Park.

Current trail maps will become available on the CC part of the town website. They are now available at the Town Hall kiosk, the Roller Barn kiosk and wall mounted maps at the library, craft guild and the Town Hall kiosk. New trails are in the works for the Town Forest, and Carol Fox's property on Old Cemetery Road, which encompasses 27 acres and the fire pond.

Monitoring and removal of invasive species is a priority. A seminar for identification will be held in spring. The list includes wild parsnip, Japanese knotweed (bamboo), purple loosestrife, wild chervil, yellow rattlebox, Japanese honeysuckle, phragmites, buckthorn, Japanese barberry, multiflora rose, spurge, and garlic mustard. Also Emerald Ash Borer insect ID and tree damage signs will be covered. Wendy Mackenzie stated that most invasive species mentioned have some medicinal value and she is not recommending their widespread eradication.

Water testing on ponds will be continued by the Magnuses. Marilyn has arranged for Sue Morse, a state biologist, to host an animal tracking seminar in spring.

The Peacham Farm Support Fund will no longer require a member of the CC to be on the three person selection panel to give out the yearly grants. Three Peacham residents with knowledge of the workings of the town and who have fair judgment will begin the 2022 grant season with applications taken after Town Meeting. Funds are held by the Town Clerk and only the amounts granted and the nature of projects will be public knowledge since this is not public tax money, similar to the Covid 19 emergency fund set up last year from private money, which is also a private, anonymously donated fund with the recipients granted their privacy.

Bruce Maclean of the Planning Commission stressed the need to preserve the open areas of Peacham that give us a magnificent reputation and a reason to visit as evidenced this past few weeks. That starts by helping the farmers to survive and hold onto the open land. Help in establishing perpetual agricultural easements or non-development covenants was discussed. The Planning Commission and the CC will meet with the Selectboard to jointly discuss ways to accomplish this longterm goal. Ron Miller said smaller farmers like his Alpaca farm are shortchanged by government regs which tend to hurt the little guy—who is every bit as important in keeping land open as the big guys.

At the next Selectboard meeting Carol Fox will be added to the CC membership.  
Elections: Chair-Marilyn nominated Dave Stauffer, Neil seconded. Dave elected as chair and will also handle the secretarial (minutes and agendas). Conservation Funds are held in a separate account by the Town Clerk.

Meeting adjourned at 12:32

Submitted by D. Stauffer