

Minutes of Town of Conway Open Space Committee Meeting, Aug. 10, 2023

Members In Attendance: Janet Chayes, Michele Turre, Aimee Anderson, Mac McCoy, Renee Ciulla
Others: Cynthia Lawton-Singer from Pollinate Conway, Meghan Siudzinski, Owen Wormser

Meeting began at 6:15

1. Approve July 24, 2023 minutes – Unanimously approved

2 Conservation District Pollinator Grant Program – Meghan Siudzinski

- Funding comes from state energy/environmental office.
- Working with municipalities to transition 'non-contributing' town owned lands to pollinator habitat
- Considers multiple strategies to enhance soils and plant w/ long view to enhance watersheds.
- The program funds experts like Conway's Owen Wormser to educate landowners.
- Landowners can sign up on their website for a consultation which will provide plant starter kit.
 - o Franklinconservationdistrict.org
- Funding for signage and education at project sites is also important.
 - o Noted that less human-trafficked areas are a priority for funding as they are more supportive to pollinators than areas that get more human traffic, such as the South River Meadow.
- Meghan would present proposals to her board for review/funding. Encourages prioritizing.
- Grant cycle is July-June, and can run up to 1.5 years to provide funds, but can be quicker.
 - o Funds are paid to growers who then provide the seeds or plant matter to the group.
- Will help support a public event with speakers to launch a project.

Janet and Cynthia reviewed the current projects/potential locations in Conway.

- Circle in front of library.
- A small area in front of the Town Office.
- Border in Veterans Memorial Park in front of Town Hall.
- South River Meadow
- Bigelow Meadow is also a proposed area which Owen reviewed for Meghan.

3 Bigelow Meadow Proposal - Owen Wormser

- 2.3 acres, sloped and typically mowed once in fall.
- Concept proposal for development now in hand, though it needs basic funding and a committed person to implement stepped up mowing and select management of invasives, in addition to installing a simple path, a few benches, planting a few trees and native shrubs.
- Cynthia noted that the Pollinate Conway group is over-extended and would not likely be able to be involved with this project.
- Discussion of how to find a person with equipment to do the selective mowing.
 - o Ask OESCO.
 - o Local retired people with tractors (Jack Lockhead, Nelson Shifflet...?)
 - o The town contracts with Andrew Smith of Smith Landscaping to mow. Check w/ him.

(Owen since reported that he identified Nick Potter as willing and able!)

4 Sign Project - South River Meadow – Jane Roy Brown

- Jane provided her first draft of copy for signs in the S. River Meadow prior to the meeting.
- General comments are 'great start'. Members to review and provide comments and edits.
- Noted that the Committee needs to move these materials onto a Committee dedicated Google drive account.
 - o Michele will inquire with Veronique about recommendations for setting up an account.

(Link to dedicated drive subsequently sent to members)

Ongoing Projects

Nature Hike: Sun. Sept. 10th *Walk Through the Mass Audubon Conway Hills Wildlife Sanctuary* 10am

- Janet had produced a flyer and committee members agree to distribute around town.
 - o Bank, OESCO, Library, PO, Bakers, Transfer Station, the Inn.
- A notice was posted in the August Conway Currents and will run again in September. Michele moved to provide \$160 to Audubon for the walk leader. Approved unanimously.

(Event later aborted by rain!)

South River Meadow: Trees

- Michele reported that planted trees were partially impacted by the flood but did OK considering.
- South River storm clean-up to be done Friday by Michele and Valdemar Anderson.

A motion to close the meeting was approved at 7:37