

Open Space Committee – Conway, MA

September 19, 2023 6:10pm Zoom meeting starts

Members present: Mac McCoy, Janet Chayes, Michele Turre and Renee Ciulla

Guest: Katherine Clarke Waddell (appointed Sept. 25th)

Approved August 10, 2023 minutes (quorum present)

Conservation District Pollinator Grant Program

Pollinate Conway's proposal for new plantings at Veterans Park. OSC endorsed grant submission.

Sign Project - South River Meadow

Tabled until future meeting. Janet might add another document. TBC...we all need to review and comment on it more. Goal to have signs up before the ground freezes.

South River Meadow

Pickleball; proposal to install walkway and hot asphalt mix...need to know if the Wetlands Protection Act is violated or not? Investigating whether to do it at the school or not? Con Comm should see and know where the wetlands are. They are having mtg on Sept 26th at 6:20pm where they should say whether it is or not. Michele asks: where will people park and where will snow removal pile go? Mac wonders why they don't just go through DEP but it sounds like they will need to. Michele displayed her map that she overlaid on Con Comm, and it shows how close the wetland is. Janet will try to attend Sept 26th meeting and perhaps Aimee and Renee. Considering sending a letter to Con Comm with the map ahead of meeting. Janet will send a draft to Open Space Comm for comments before sending the letter to Con Comm.

Question: does Conway need **four** pickleball courts??

Birds: Katie has seen plenty of swallows, two bluebird nests, new birdhouses put up (round and white). There's evidence that invasive, destructive house sparrows don't like them. Question of who is haying field (Jae Silverman) and Katie wondering if the bird houses were too close to other species. She wants to have them out in the meadow but it's not a great idea to bother Jae about attempting to hay around birdhouses...

Katie is suspicious that wrens killed the bluebirds. Conway Currents should mention about the birdboxes and perhaps some of the videos Katie has of baby birds in the boxes.

Trees: The 75+ trees/shrubs planted last year are doing ok. All still have deer guards. Janet reported that Lisa Hayden (Woodlands Partnership) inspected the site with the U.S. Forest Service grant monitor on Aug. 16. Luckily, shortly before, Michele and Val Anderson had re-supported/removed debris caused by the torrential rains.

Invasives: Last several years there has been herbicide treatment. Janet said when she called this year they didn't sound hopeful they would be able to. Everyone is short-staffed/tapped out. Michele said the flooding broke apart knotweed and landed in many places post-flooding. Many knotweed pieces were already hand-pulled up (before they re-root) fortunately, and we need to keep at it. Question of when to do it. And challenging to organize and get people out. We have a list of 100 people in our email database.

Plank Replacement on the road side of the Meadow that rotted out. Mac and Janet might take a look on Saturday at 9am to assess it.

Invasive Japanese Stiltgrass removal: At the gorge area down in the South River State Forest. It's an annual grass with billions of seeds that travel through wind and deer. The state paid professionals who should have treated were not able to. If a pulling party isn't organized in the next week it will need to be left.

New Business (not anticipated in advance): Bigelow Meadow; Owen Wormser previously consulted. He identified Nick Potter who can do selective mowing on Bigelow. (Mow around plants we want to keep there). In the past the highway has clear cut it annually from growing back to forest. They would not selectively mow though. If we approve some money we could have Owen supervise Nick Potter to selectively mow. Janet proposes we allocate some funding for it and we approved \$2,000 unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned 7:20pm

Tentative next meeting October 16, 2023