

Lincoln Conservation Commission (LCC) - Public Meeting Minutes

July 7, 2021

Approved: \*\*\*\*

Members Present: Ari Kurtz (Chair), Larry Buell (remote), Laura Regrut, Kathleen Shepard, Richard Selden  
Members Absent: Susan Hall Mygatt  
Conservation Staff: Michele Grzenda, Conservation Director; Stacy Carter, Conservation Planner, Emma Coates, Land Manager, Ryan Brown, Land Steward

*This meeting was held virtually Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order, as Extended on June 15, 2021, with the Governor's signing of Senate Bill # 2475, Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law.*

Conservation Commission Vacancy and Applicants Remote Meet and Greet

The Conservation Office received two Commission member applications: Becca Fasciano and Jason Lee. Ms. Fasciano was unable to make the meeting. Mr. Lee introduced himself - he moved to Lincoln in February 2021. He works in health care policy and research and has experience with social psychology. Mr. Lee is available for Wednesday morning site visits with the Commission.

Review Meeting Minutes from June 16, 2021

Motion by Mr. Buell to approve; seconded by Ms. Shepard; approved by roll call vote 4:0:1.

Conservation Land Use Vision & Discussion re: Trail User Experience

Lincoln Land Conservation Trust (LLCT) and Conservation Department (LCD) staff have begun a comprehensive review of Lincoln's trail uses and rules surrounding those trail uses. Michele Grzenda, Conservation Director, gave a PowerPoint presentation which discussed trail use vision and the goals of Lincoln's 2017 Open Space Plan. The Plan identified objectives to promote public access and use of open space and recreation lands. One particular goal is to "respond to changes in land use by reviewing access criteria and developing plans to accommodate new and shared uses where appropriate". Lincoln Conservation Land Rules and Regulations were adopted in 1994, with subsequent updates in 2003, 2007 and 2014 (it appears the 2014 version was never formally adopted). Conservation land hosts a variety of uses, and these uses occasionally come into conflict – this arises when users have different philosophies regarding the use of conservation land and the kind of experience a particular trail user expects when visiting conservation land. As we think about acceptable trail uses, we need to consider the following criteria: trail surface and width, cross-town connectivity, compatibility of trail uses, and ease of understanding by trail users. We should also think about what impacts we have on wildlife and natural habitats.

Mr. Selden believes step 1 is to assess what is working, what is not working and what kind of feedback we receive from the community – information from staff and calls into the office and to LLCT. He suggested that step 2 would be to start broadening out to more public input. Mr. Buell stated that the Commission should look holistically at the policy level. Ms. Regrut is interested in learning more about what other towns are doing and what our residents want and likes the idea of going slowly. Mr. Kurtz would like to identify criteria for assessing trail use; physical characteristics of the trail (terrain, steepness, treadway surface). Ari Kurtz pointed out that many of our surrounding towns allow mountain biking on most, if not all, trails. He noted that Lincoln does not provide bike access for Lincoln residents into Adams woods. Trail use conflict will exist. And that is why trail use signage and education on proper etiquette is very important. Mr. Kurtz believes that the Commission needs to respond to changes in trail use and trail interest. Former Conservation Director, Tom Gumbart, believed that the trails are in good condition and that the town should consider increasing the availability of biking on conservation land. The current rules in Lincoln states that "biking is not permitted unless signs indicate otherwise"

The Commission opened the discussion up for public comment. Ginger Reiner, member of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) encouraged the Commission to hold a public forum. Ms. Reiner said that she appreciates this discussion and hopes to see more bike access on the trail system. Bob Wolf, co-chair of BPAC, advocates for more bike use for transportation and recreation. BPAC is interested in helping family cyclists to traverse the town. Mr. Wolf believes there are four or five possible trail linkages to consider. He noted that Lincoln has hazardous roadways – what are

the ways that bikers can get across town on safe pathways and trails? Mr. Wolf looks forward to future engagement and suggested that the use of the cart paths/fire roads is the priority.

Nancy Soulette said that she is very interested in a public forum and is concerned that many bird watchers and walkers are not aware that the Commission is considering opening trails to uses like bikes. Jeannine Taylor – Granville Road – said that she remembers very aggressive bikers speeding down the trails and disrupting more passive use. Various attendees expressed concern that if you open up the trails to family biking, you will also open the system up to groups of aggressive mountain bikers. There was agreement that educational signs displaying proper etiquette is essential. Ms. Taylor enjoys walking her dog off leash on trails. Ms. Soulette sees signs of bike tracks on trails that do not allow bikes and is concerned about opening more trails up to bikes. Paul Svetz, resident, said that he remembers when trail bikes first came into Lincoln. Erosion was so bad that maintenance was a challenge for Land Trust and Department staff. Mr. Svetz brought up the Lincoln Land and Trail book published several years ago that captures the history and coordination of the trail map. Mr. Svetz appreciates the support of coordinating the input of all three organizations – LLCT, RLF, and LCC. He stated that standards for signage are important, and asked who assumes the liabilities and maintenance of the various trails owned and managed by the different conservation organizations? Ken Bassett, resident, reminded the Commission that maintenance of the roadside paths is essential. Some of the paths are not ADA compliant and he believes them unsafe.

#### Capital Planning 5-Year Plan

Every Town department needs to submit an updated 5-year plan for Capital requests at the beginning of summer. Capital funds have been used to purchase our pickup and dump trucks, our tractor and various implements, and FY22's land management tool package. Our updated 5-year plan includes replacements for our pickup truck and tractor, repairs to the Muster Barn and new implements for the tractor. Conservation's tentative plan for FY23's Capital request is a small tractor and flail mower attachment to supplement our field edge and trail work – Jim Henderson donated many hours of his time to the department using a similar setup.

#### 9:00 p.m. Tree Removal Policy Discussion

During the last tree removal policy discussion on 5/5/21, Commission members suggested that the document be made more user friendly, that more prose be used rather than the outline format, and that definitions be incorporated into the document (rather than listing the definitions separately). Staff worked on reformatting the policy, creating draft educational information that would be placed on the website and future press releases. In addition, a tree removal application and tree/shrub replacement guidelines were drafted. Discussion ensued. Motion by Mr. Buell to revise the size classification of small trees as those trees under 12" DBH and large trees as those 12" DBH or larger; seconded by Ms. Shepard; roll call vote: each member responded Aye. Motion by Mr. Selden to approve the tree removal policy as amended; seconded by Mr. Buell; roll call vote: each member responded Aye.

#### 9:20 p.m. Emma Coates, Land Manager, introduced Lincoln's new Trail Steward: Ryan Brown

#### 9:23 p.m. 1911 Adams Map Preservation Project Discussion

Friends of Modern Architecture (FOMA) reached out to the Conservation Department several months ago with the goal of preserving a 1911 subdivision map of the Adams' land south of Walden Pond. FOMA worked with Library staff to bring the map to the Northeast Document Conservation Center, and we have since received a quote for preservation and digital/paper reproductions. The Library and FOMA would like to partner with the Historical Commission and the Conservation Commission in submitting a CPA funding request this fall to help fund preservation and produce a replica of this map for display. The Commissioners were unaware of this map and are happy to hear that town boards and non-profits are interested in protecting it. Motion by Ms. Shepard to support the request to preserve the Adams map and that the Commission is agreeable to be a co-sponsor of the CPA request with the hope that the town archivist can work with the other organizations to draft the narrative of this request; seconded by Richard Selden; roll call vote: each member responded Aye.

#### 9:25 p.m. - Reports, Correspondence & Announcements

- Ms. Carter informed the Commission that Drumlin Farms requested to terminate to Umbrello Farm. A Request for Proposals will be issued by the Conservation Department to find a new farmer for Umbrello.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30