



Williamsburg Conservation Commission
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Meeting Minutes – January 18, 2018

Commissioners present – *Marci Caplis, Mary Dudek, Andrew MacLachlan, and Joe Rogers*

Members of the public present – none

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm

- 1) Marci Caplis reported that she had submitted a budget request for the same amount as for 2017.
- 2) Discussion of what to include in the 2017 Annual Report.
- 3) Discussion, as requested by the Select Board, to consider whether to prohibit dogs from properties under Conservation Commission stewardship. The Select Board wants the decision made by the committees responsible for each particular town property. The Conservation Commission has jurisdiction over four properties: Geer Hill, Briar Hill, The Hall property, and Horse Mountain.

Several points were made during the discussion.

- There is a town-wide leash law. Dogs must be on leash or under voice control of the owner.
- There is a lot of land in town with no trails. There are some trails that do not allow dogs. It is good to have trails for dogs and it is not reasonable to ban dogs from all areas.
- Wildlife and people don't mix well. It is important to separate recreational land from conservation land.
- The Conservation Commission's mission is to conserve land and protect wildlife. Therefore, where allowed, dogs should be on leash on Conservation Commission properties to protect wildlife.
- The other dog-related concern is feces, and a concern about water contamination. Dog owners are expected to remove feces. Providing plastic bags and a waste receptacle at trailheads was discussed.

Marcianna Caplis C. Todd Lynch Joseph Rogers Mary Dudek Andrew MacLachlan
Williamsburg Conservation Commissioners
Melinda McCall, Commission Secretary

- The Commission can use signage at its properties to educate the public and encourage responsible land use by dog owners.
- The Commission will clarify its position on its web page. It will also dedicate the upcoming Spring newsletter to this issue.

The Commission agreed on the following policies for each of its properties.

1. Geer Hill: Trails are overgrown. Commission would consider not improving trails, but needs to check back on the conditions under which Geer Hill was gifted to the town.
 2. Briar Hill. Has clear trails and an informational kiosk at the trailhead. Will provide extra information at the kiosk discouraging dogs, but requesting that anyone who brings dogs keeps them leashed and removes their feces.
 3. The Hall property, with clear trails and an informational kiosk at the trailhead. The trails on this property connect with trails on the Audubon , which prohibits dogs. Will provide extra information at the kiosk discouraging dogs, but requesting that anyone who brings dogs keeps them leashed and removes their feces. Will also inform that these trails connect with Audubon property, O'Neill Hill, where dogs are prohibited.
 4. Horse Mountain, with no trails, and is considered an area of high wildlife value by the Nature Conservancy. Dogs are prohibited.
- One of the properties of concern to a town resident is the old reservoir across from the Big View trails on Unquomonk road. The Conservation Commission has no jurisdiction here.

4) Two forest cutting plans were received.

5) Reminder of upcoming MACC Spring Meeting on March 3rd.

6) Revised minutes from the December 14, 2017 meeting were accepted.

7) Next meeting is February 8, 2018.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:40

Respectfully submitted,
Melinda McCall
Secretary - Williamsburg Conservation Commission

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