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**TOWN OF PELHAM  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN–MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 20, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Cote called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30pm

**PRESENT:** Jaie Bergeron, Heather Corbett, Kevin Cote, Jason Croteau, Charlene Takesian, Town Administrator Joseph Roark

**ABSENT:** None

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**MEETING MINUTES REVIEW**

January 30, 2024

**MOTION:** (Corbett/Croteau) To approve the January 30, 2024 meeting minutes as is.

**VOTE:** (3-0-2) The motion carried.

**OPEN FORUM**

No one came forward during open forum.

**APPOINTMENTS**

**Al Steward, Conservation Commission Chair: Consideration of making a picnic area and canoe/kayak launch on Beaver Brook Town owned property off Mammoth Road.**

Mr. Steward explained that RSA 36A:2 talks about how one of the duties of conservation is providing an index of all natural resources, which they compiled two years ago. He said that they developed a conservation plan within the past year and have been trying to gather information about ideas that can improve or increase utilization of Town and State-owned land. Mr. Steward referenced the Town’s Master Plan and stated that it says they should provide diverse recreational opportunities and programs. He added that he has worked with the Public Water Access Committee of New Hampshire in the past, and they work to ensure access for all to public bodies of water in the State. He said that Beaver Brook is considered public water, and

47 they continue to stock the Brook. He said that the area off of Mammoth Road is approximately  
48 three acres, has a little over 300 feet of frontage on Mammoth Road, and around 500 feet of  
49 frontage between Mammoth Road and Beaver Brook. Mr. Steward said this land is ideal because  
50 it is gently sloping, very mature, and easily accessible. He said that if they remove a few trees,  
51 they will be able to put in a parking lot, picnic tables and benches, grills, trash collection, and a  
52 trail going down to Beaver Brook. Mr. Steward explained that the Town has owned this land  
53 since 1965.

54

55 Mr. Steward said that he sat with Ryan Duquette from DES, and he let him know about three  
56 different areas of concern. Mr. Steward stated that 50 feet out from the edge of the Brook you  
57 can put a trail without disturbing the rest as a buffer to the Brook. From 50-150 feet you can  
58 remove up to 75% of the forested area, but they are not planning to do this. Beyond 150-250 feet,  
59 they can put in easily accessible parking spaces. They can also have access to Mammoth Road  
60 without disturbing any of the forestry. He said they hope to have either a wood or charcoal grill  
61 for cooking, picnic tables, and possibly even a cover in case of inclement weather. The idea  
62 would be to have a place for people to park, picnic, fish, and launch kayaks or canoes.

63

64 Mr. Steward is looking for the Board of Selectmen to permit him to develop this land. He  
65 clarified that there will be no expense to taxpayers, as he will be looking for different ways to  
66 fund this through Conservation, Forestry, and public support.

67

68 Mr. Croteau asked Mr. Steward what his long-term plan was to take care of this land and keep it  
69 maintained. Mr. Steward explained that as of now he does not have set plans, he is just looking  
70 for permission to move forward with the idea. Mr. Croteau suggested they talk about this with  
71 Brian Johnson before anything moved forward.

72

73 Town Administrator Roark stated that Mr. Steward will need a driveway permit from the State of  
74 New Hampshire before they can install parking spaces. He said that the diagram looks adequate  
75 from what he can see.

76

77 Chairman Cote said he thinks it is a good idea but thinks the Planning Board should be involved  
78 in this as well to make sure they have all necessary permits.

79

80 Ms. Takesian asked if Brian Johnson had come in before with a plan like this. Mr. Steward said  
81 they had a similar plan in the past, but not for the same location. Ms. Takesian asked if there is  
82 public access to Beaver Brook currently. Mr. Steward said there is on Lane Road, where the  
83 Town owns another 2-3 acres, but it has not been maintained well over the years and has started  
84 to become overgrown.

85

86 Chairman Cote asked Mr. Steward to get more solid plans together talk to the Planning Board  
87 and then bring them back before the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Steward agreed to this.

88

89

90 **Yvonne La-Garde, Council on Aging Chair: Introduction of the Community Trail**  
91 **Coalition**

92

93 Ms. La-Garde explained that she is here as a representative of the Community Trail Coalition  
94 Committee, and they have 13 members. She said their goal is to enhance the Town's trail system  
95 to better serve the diverse needs of Town residents. Their Coalition is sponsored by the Pelham  
96 Council on Aging and has a membership approaching 200 people. Ms. La-Garde explained that  
97 they feel this Coalition is necessary because of the changing demographics of the Town, and the  
98 needs identified through various assessments and studies. In 2020, the Pelham Council on Aging  
99 commissioned the National Regional Planning Commission to assess the needs of older adults in  
100 Town. One of their recommendations stemming from that assessment was the need to increase  
101 awareness of Town parks and conservation land and to develop older adult programming to  
102 make spaces more accessible. Ms. La-Garde stated that by 2023 1 in 5 individuals will be aged  
103 65 or older. She also noted that 35% of Pelham's population are adults aged 50 or above. She  
104 explained that it is not just about catering to the needs of older adults, it is also about promoting  
105 the health and wellbeing of our entire community. She said that a recent study found that hiking  
106 plays a crucial role in physical and mental health. She also stated that the Town's Master Plan  
107 highlights the importance of accessible recreational facilities and programs, especially in light of  
108 the increasing older population. She explained that the plan outlines several recommendations,  
109 including the addition of amenities to existing trails, creating more accessible outdoor recreation  
110 opportunities, and fostering collaboration amongst various Town departments and committees.

111  
112 Ms. La-Garde explained that even though there is existing data showing the need for friendly and  
113 accessible trails, there is no coordinated effort to address the needs. This is why they started the  
114 Community Trail Coalition. This Coalition is made up of a group of diverse individuals of all  
115 ages, including runners, bikers, horseback riders, pet owners, and those with disabilities. They all  
116 share the common goal of improving and creating friendly trails for people of all ages and  
117 mobility.

118  
119 Ms. La-Garde stated that the Coalition's goals for 2024 include establishing a trail rating system,  
120 assessing existing trails, adding amenities to improve trail friendliness, promoting trails through  
121 a centralized social media presence, and engaging volunteers to organize educational activities  
122 and events on trails. They have a website ([pelhamctc.org](http://pelhamctc.org)), and social media accounts. Ms. La-  
123 Garde stated that they plan to plant geocaches on every trail in Town and hold their first guided  
124 hike on May 11, 2024. They also plan to initiate an annual celebration in October of Pelham's  
125 conservation and park lands, so people can learn more about biodiversity and the crucial role  
126 these lands play in maintaining the Town's natural beauty. They also want to cap off the  
127 festivities by holding an award ceremony where they honor individuals and organizations for  
128 their outstanding contributions to conservation and park preservation.

129  
130 Ms. La-Garde stated that their long-term goals include building new friendly and all-persons  
131 trails, identifying and improving trails for bikers, and ensuring the long-term maintenance of our  
132 trail system through the engagement of young and diverse populations as trail stewards.  
133 Implementation of their goals will require funding, Ms. La-Garde stated. She said they will  
134 create a fundraising plan, identify potential donors, organize fundraising events, seek grants,  
135 utilize online fundraising platforms, engage volunteers, and communicate impact. She said that  
136 by implementing these strategies they will be able to raise the funds necessary to reach their  
137 goals without relying on funding from the Town.

138

139 Chairman Cote thanked Ms. La-Garde.

140

141

142 **DISCUSSION**

143

144 Ms. Takesian stated that the moratorium they have for building on Sherburne Road expires on  
145 March 7, 2024. She would like to extend the moratorium for another year. She said that they  
146 cannot vote tonight but thinks they should talk about it now.

147

148 Mr. Bergeron asked Ms. Takesian if the Planning Board is asking to extend it for another year.  
149 Ms. Takesian said that the Water Commission was working on a plan to get water in that area but  
150 has not made a lot of progress and the problem is persisting. Mr. Bergeron stated that Weston  
151 and Sampson are conducting a study on this issue as well. Town Administrator Roark stated that  
152 their study should be completed this year.

153

154 Chairman Cote stated that he does not support extending the moratorium, as they have had a year  
155 to find answers and were unable to make a lot of progress.

156

157 Mr. Croteau asked if any applications to build in this area were denied. He noted that people can  
158 still apply to build in the area if they can prove they have access to enough water. Mr. Bergeron  
159 stated that he does not think anybody has been denied yet, but he believes there are some people  
160 in the process of trying to prove they have a substantial water source.

161

162 Ms. Takesian noted that Weston and Sampson are coming on March 8, 2024, to provide the  
163 Town with an update.

164

165 Chairman Cote stated that he believes it is just a handful of houses on the Road that have issues.  
166 Ms. Takesian said that it is the same homes that had issues last year, but new construction is not  
167 going to help the issue. Chairman Cote asked if they had found proof that it would not help the  
168 issue. Ms. Takesian and Mr. Bergeron said they do not know until the study is complete. Ms.  
169 Takesian noted they are also trying to improve the Town's well ordinance.

170

171 Mr. Bergeron suggested that, since the Planning Board requested it, they put this on the next  
172 agenda to be voted on. Chairman Cote stated that if they are going to have a moratorium the  
173 Planning Board is going to need a more solid plan. Ms. Takesian explained that they are close to  
174 having the results from the study, they are just not ready yet. She is worried that the moratorium  
175 is expiring before they have the results of the study.

176

177 Mr. Croteau said that developers can prove they have substantial water if they want to build.  
178 Chairman Cote explained that the moratorium is for people to prove they have water before they  
179 can build, but when they do this they are not proving that it is not going to negatively affect other  
180 homes in the area's water. He does not think it makes sense to keep the moratorium going when  
181 people cannot prove it one way or the other. Mr. Bergeron stated that the moratorium states you  
182 must have water from an outside source like Pennichuck or a community well.

183

184 Chairman Cote stated that he does not think the moratorium was written properly, and not  
185 enough information has been provided to extend it.

186  
187 Mr. Bergeron suggested Ms. Takesian let the Planning Board know they should send someone to  
188 the next Board of Selectmen meeting to discuss what their plan is.

189  
190 Chairman Cote noted that they are working on updating the Town's well ordinance, but asked  
191 what else the Planning Board is doing about this. Mr. Bergeron stated that they realized the  
192 Town does not have anyone overseeing the well testing. This is important because the company  
193 conducting the testing is being paid by the developer, and no one is keeping track of the numbers  
194 to make sure they are accurate. They would like to hire a third-party company to oversee any  
195 testing of wells in the future.

196  
197 Ms. Takesian suggested they put this topic on the agenda for their next meeting and have  
198 someone from the Planning Board attend as well. Chairman Cote agreed.

199

200

### 201 **SELECTMEN AND TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS**

202

203 **Mr. Croteau** had nothing to report.

204

205 **Ms. Takesian** reported that she attended the Mardi Gras party at the Hobbs Community Center,  
206 and it was a great time. She thanked the Board of Selectmen for allowing them to have hurricane  
207 drinks at the party. She also mentioned that she has heard a lot of good feedback about the Parks  
208 and Recreation Department overseeing the Hobbs Community Center but has heard some  
209 complaints as well. She hopes they can talk with these people to see what can be improved.

210

211 **Chairman Cote** had nothing to report.

212

213 **Mr. Bergeron** reported that they brought back the Economic Development Committee this year,  
214 and they have been meeting with new businesses to help them along the way. They also had past  
215 committee members come to meetings to pick their brains about things. They have been talking  
216 about installing "Welcome to Pelham" signs on Route 38.

217

218 **Ms. Corbett** reported that the Council on Aging is hosting a candidate event on March 7, 2024,  
219 from 4:00 to 7:00 pm at Town Hall. People can meet all the candidates running for Town office.

220

221 **Town Administrator Roark** reported that there was a pipe failure on Simpson Road. He stated  
222 that Highway Director Jim Hoffman was able to secure piping and a contractor to turn this  
223 project around quickly. The road is currently closed but should open within the next couple of  
224 days when repairs are complete.

225

226

### 227 **REQUEST FOR NON-PUBLIC SESSION**

228

229 **MOTION:** (Corbett/Croteau) Request for non-public session per RSA 91-A: 3, II (a):  
230 personnel

231

232 **ROLLCALL VOTE:**

233

234 Selectman Bergeron– Yes

235 Selectman Corbett– Yes

236 Chairman Cote– Yes

237 Selectmen Croteau– Yes

238 Selectman Takesian – Yes

239

240 (5-0-0) The motion carried.

241

242 It was noted that when the Board returned, after the non-public session, the Board would not take  
243 any other action publicly, except to seal the minutes of the non-public session and to adjourn the  
244 meeting. The Board entered a non-public session at approximately 7:20 p.m.

245

246

247 **ADJOURNMENT**

248

249 Respectfully submitted,

250

251 Makayla Clougherty

252 Recording Secretary