



TOWN OF PELHAM

6 Village Green
Pelham, NH 03076

PELHAM FORESTRY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES – **APPROVED**

MONDAY
07/24/23
7PM-9:09pm

PUBLIC MEETING HELD AT:
Sherburne Hall, 6 Village Green, Pelham, NH 03076

Attendance

Committee Members

Mike Gendreau
Raymond Brunelle
Paul Gagnon
Linda Irish-Simpson
Bob Lamoureux

Start of Meeting – 7PM Pledge of Allegiance

April 2023 Meeting Minutes: Minutes approved for FC meeting on 06/26/23. (Vote: motion Bob L to accept the meeting minutes. Second Paul G
Yes - 5 & No -0)

Open Forum: Beth Jussaume – Hinds Lane. She felt that the meeting agenda was not posted on our website and due to it not being posted 10 days prior to the meeting we do not vote on any agenda items this evening. Chairman Gendreau explained the agenda was sent out to the proper people in the town of Pelham. He then stated it needed to be posted 24 hours prior to the meeting. It was not done for any malicious reasons. The agenda was completed and sent to Melissa Binette (town secretary), Brian Demers (IT department) and the library. All was posted publicly as required. He then stated he doesn't have access to the FC website and relies on the town IT department to take care of it. Vice Chair Brunelle thought it needed to be posted in 3 spots where the chair explained it only needs to be in 2 locations, which they were. BMs. Jussaume said she thinks it's an "RS meeting and she did check on it and specifically specified it should be on the website and it wasn't". She claimed "logistics" but felt the public wasn't notified. Bob L asked if MG checked with the Town Manager and said yes, he did and stated again he was not out of compliance. She felt because she always checks on the FC website, and it wasn't there but then said she found the agenda and felt because the items were important. MG stated we are listening to items that we are not familiar with and wants to listen with an open mind and see what they have to say. If a motion is made, we will entertain it. Ms. Jussaume again said it wasn't on the meeting and that items should be placed on hold. She said was OK to discuss them. MG said all items on our agendas are important. BL ask if anyone else had an issue. Linda said she didn't think it was an unreasonable request. RB felt we should at least hear what the topics are and go from there. If was posted in two spots, MG asked legal. Ms. Jussaume said "NH RS does specially state". MG asked if she had the RS in front of her, she said she didn't but said she will charge her phone and get it for us. MG asked if it is mandated it be on the FC website or recommends. She didn't know. Linda asked if Ms. Jussaume meant the "right to know law" (91-A). Ms. Jussaume felt it sounded familiar and might be what she read earlier.



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Linda asked if we could make sure we ask that the agenda be posted on the FC website. MG explained where he sends it every month and he cannot control where it gets posted after he sends it. He does not have access to the FC website. Ms. Jussaume asked, "yes or no". RB felt everything was done right as, checked with legal and with a meeting once a month that we should listen and carry on. Ms. Jussaume agreed & thanked us. Paul G chimed in suggesting we really should get a legal opinion and that many people do not walk to the town hall or library to see agendas. He felt they likely meet the criteria, but it is not up to the times. BOS Rep Heather Corbett came to the mic and read the law and said it was posted within 24 hours in two places. Some back and forth with Ms. Jussaume. Bob L reiterated that MG sent it, was posted in two places. HC agreed and said it is summer and believes Mr. Demers (IT department) is on vacation but it hit the legal benchmark. MG said he did everything he was supposed to, expressed how Brian Demers and all the town employees just "get it done". Ms. Jussaume thanked us and sat back down. MG said he was going to address it on the walk-in items and was glad she brought it up. Bob L said, "thank you Deb".

Pelham Community Garden: Two reps from the Agriculture Committee (AG) were Vice Chair Danielle Masse-Quinn (DMQ) and Chair Jenny Larson (JL). A packet was handed out to the members to review several days before the meeting. They reviewed the packet. Their goal is to create a community garden in the Merriam Farm Conservation area. She explained what the AG roles. She then reviewed their vision, mission next then values. AG is requesting 2.434 acres out of the 16 acres. AG members Doherty and Fisher volunteered to plow, rototill, and cultivate the land making it ready for locals to plant. Proposed 15x15 plots staked off by the AG commission but residents are responsible for seedlings, watering cans/buckets, tools, and weeding. This is phase 1. Parking is suggested at the gate at the end of Moonshadow Dr. or could also park off Mammoth Rd. Must be Pelham residents and register with Parks & Rec. Annual fee, \$25 with application completed. This has been discussed with Brian Johnson. All felt best way to handle money. Phase 2 for water. Would like to propose a 10-12 foot shallow well connected to Beaver Brook through on-site spigot. No hoses allowed, only buckets. They stated a list of local surrounding towns with community gardens. Ray B thanked them for the packet to understand it better. Linda asked how many lots. Danielle did the calculation and came up with 471 plots based on acreage. She also reviewed what Merriam Farm produced in the past showing the area is already fertile. Ray B asked about schools having access to this, community church(s) etc. Response was yes and some towns dedicate plots to them. Bob L, looking as a NIMBY (not in my back yard). Bob L felt parking at the end of Moonshadow might be a bit too much and that if we move forward consider making a parking lot, so people park off the road. He also felt should be a pilot program in situations where this could become a problem with "funny stuff" growing so we can stop it. His concern is full permission, and something comes up and we can't stop it and fear of being sued. He was looking for others input from others to help with his opinion. JL stated the document they complete will be lengthy and if they don't follow will lose their rights, money etc. She also said they could suggest game trail cameras. DMQ stated they would like FC involved. RB mentioned when the bluebird society first came in front of FC there was some uncertainty and commented on how successful it has become. Paul G asked about other



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locations. DMQ said they did and how she walked 3 locations with PG, Merriam Farms, PVMP and a location off Old County Road. All 3 were brought back to AG committee and all came together that Merriam Farms would be best. She felt the historical aspect would be best fit from being cultivated since the 1800's. PG said that end of Old County Rd was a farm & town land. Said he talked about a community garden 10 years ago. Has a parking location, 2 streams, and space. PG said he is totally in support of the idea of a community garden just not at Merriam. PG doesn't see it as protecting agriculture land, it is converting field habitat to agricultural land. PG then said Bob's idea of turning some of it into a parking lot makes the idea even less attractive. PG said he is looking to help in any way he can. He said conservation commission has millions of dollars. He said why can't we find a spot. Example Erik's Farm. He asked if we thought Erik would sell 5 acres of land on route 38, that is Ag land. PG spent a good amount of time speaking about Merriam Farms and some other areas. He spoke of the transition from farm to field habitat. PG felt human use, pesticides and scarecrows is not consistent with what he said we are trying to accomplish with field habitat. Explained how different species fear different things. Explained why the trails were put where they were placed. He said where the ditch will placed is in a prime wetland. PG gave an option to Raymond Park. He brought up Old County Road again. He said he spoke with Brian Johnson today and would commit to meeting with Erik (Erik's Farm) to try to purchase a portion of his land. PG felt we have some time, asked for 6 months to find a better spot. He suggested multiple site walks. (1) Merriam Farm (2) Cutter Woods Field. Bob felt Cutter might not be a bad idea. He was over there, and all the neighbors helped clear the road. Bob L feels you cannot see a house and there is water. PG said you could have parking where the timber harvest landing was. PG said again he loves the idea and wants to help. He said he has a list of other ideas and felt he knows the town as good as anybody. He said he would rather clear forest land, stump it and build a garden. He said we have 1,500 acres of forest land that FC manages. JL thanked him for his feedback and wants to work with all boards in town to make this be successful. She wanted to correct a few things PG said. (1) The AG by no means would ever would say or think that the FC is neglecting any of the land that you will receive. (2) We would never be for any insecticides or pesticides. (3) There would be no illegal stuff grown. PG feels there is no way to control that. DMQ felt that they would never be close to 100 people there where PG wanted clarification on how many plots. He said 400 plus. DMQ said they don't know how many people would be involved then said Bob L pilot program was a good way to start. See if it goes. DMQ felt she wished PG would have told her how he felt before they spent all the time on a location, he pointed out to them to consider. Some back and forth on their meeting on locations. DMQ asked PG where the prime wetlands is on Merriam Farms. She said her research showed it as a Group 2 soil. PG felt a hole to be dug and a trench to the brook and the trench would be in the 100 ft buffer. Chair MG asked to confirm if a trench will be built. She explained Mr. Fisher could come up to explain. There is no trench. BL asked Al Steward to come up and ask him a few questions. BL asked for the history of the community garden and how it has been 2 years since they started, and BL feels it is time to move forward on something. He would like us to give the OK to move forward. BL does not want this to be dragged out and asked how we can expedite it. PG felt it is not being rushed and proposed walks to Raymond Park, Cutter Woods because nothing would be started until next year. Chair JL said in the fall the manure



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would be laid out before the winter for next Spring. Al Steward asked PG how to discern the difference from one field to another. PG felt he explained that you disturbed wildlife from humans picking veggies. He feels we need a field that should be sized appropriately. BL does not want to drag it out and feels it might be good to explore Cutter Woods. Al Steward said he has spoken with Erik several times and will not sell anything. PG and BL both felt that Cutter Woods would be ideal to check out. BL said he could get someone to open the gate and trim the area so we could have a site walk. Al Steward asked PG to clarify what he meant by spending conservation commission money for this project (Al Steward is the chair of conservation commission). PG felt CC duties is to protect open space and that if something came up they could buy it. Al also asked to be more specific on what he meant by clearing a forest to create farmland. PG explained they have some experience in that in the Gumpas Pond area. PG said for AG to just pick a small field. Chair JL said they have no budget to truck in whatever the cost would be needed for loam etc. DMQ read one of reasons they chose Merriam Farm. The Merriam owners would like to see it remain opened & maintained for future generations. She is trying to figure out where it's saying they want it maintained as a forest land and wildlife habitat. PG stated it is owned by the town now and that no where on the deed does it say the Merriam's require it to be agricultural. He felt the Merriam's had confidence in the Town of Pelham it would managed appropriately. He said he met Fred Merriam and said he was "delighted". PG went on to say they are no longer the owners, and we shouldn't let the prior owners decide what the Town of Pelham should do to manage this land. He felt we need to pick a better spot. RB had some questions about the map and location. Some back and forth on explaining it. PG stated again a good idea to take a site walk at Merriam and Cutter Woods. Linda said she is 100% in favor of a community garden but feels it's in the wrong location. Traffic and issue and she read from his speech. She felt the area should be passive recreation. DMQ read a definition of passive recreation which listed a number of things including community gardens. Linda disagreed. DMQ laid out her reasons why it would be good while Linda suggested other areas and not rush. Chair JL said we are 2+ years into this which she felt is not rushing. She also said if FC wants to talk it over, a pilot plan which she felt AG would have no problem coming back. Chair MG asked if any other towns have had any issues. They could not find any issue other than a DES issue with a wetland. RB felt that seeing this area makes sense if the plots are properly placed along with other reasons & he would be in favor of this location. PG feels it's a shame we don't want to explore other areas. PG feels people are taking the easy way out and immediately was challenged by AG members that they are not taking the easy way out. Another several minutes of back and forth with PG and AG. Chair MG said there is not going to be a decision tonight and we need to wrap this up. Linda said we should listen to the people on Moonshadow. She felt we should revisit this in a month. Nick Spanos is in favor of a community garden. He doesn't think we should spend \$75/hour for Eric to site walk. He feels as a board this can't be swept under the rug and something should be done. He also felt the FC should spend the money for loaming the area if it came down to clearing a forest. Bob L feels the Cutter Woods area should be explored. Bob L does not see this area as a traffic area and leaning towards that spot. He feels he is leaning towards that area now. RB suggested a site walk in the Cutter Farms and Raymond Park. Chair MG said he feels as a board we are 100% in favor of a community garden and asked for a motion



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that we agree to getting this done. Site Walk at Cutter Woods, Bob L will have the area bush hogged, gate will be unlocked. Five-minute walk about 1,000 feet. The Site Walk is set for Tuesday August 1st at 5PM off Sherburne Road. This is right next to Chestnut Lane. Public comment by Samantha Mastone on Moonshadow Drive. Concerned about the idea of a community garden in Merriam Farms. Was concerned when FC started developing the land, but they have come to terms with it. There was a lot of traffic but seems to have stopped before the parking lot was built. She is concerned for her family and felt there are better options. She speaks for the people on her road. Chair MG asked if there was a list signed by them. She said no but said there are others here who will speak. MG asked if anyone felt differently, and all agreed they are not in favor. Bob L last comment to the people who live on Moonshadow to just think what kind of affordable housing could be in this area if Forestry and Conservation didn't push for this.

Class VI Roads & Class A Trails: Al Steward presentation was the one he presented in front of the Board of Selectmen on the Class VI Road and Class A Trails. He got more involved based on comments from Dave Hennessey from a previous meeting about RSA's in the State of NH reviewing developing off Class VI roads. Bob L said the way he understands it the town is breaking the law by locking these gates. Al said they are not abiding by the RSA. He also believes the Class A trail should be a full access public way. He has asked the Police Chief to look into it. Paul G said we (FC) have no jurisdiction to these roads/trails. Due to damage discovered while firetrucks were trying to get through an area, the FC asked legal could write a warrant article and says the gates to be locked. He asked Al to contact legal and have him chime in. Paul G read the article and said the BOS can undue it not us. Bob L wanted to know if a state statute overwrites the town law. Some back and forth and discussion ended until we hear from legal. Bob L wanted to thank Al for all the research he did on this. Linda didn't understand why Conservation is involved. Al told her that is what he laid out in the beginning of his presentation.

Hike Challenge and Trail Condition: Linda said due to it getting late would only update on the hike challenge. In the last month 10 people completed the hike challenge. A total of 40 people. All 10 from Pelham. This has been 2 years since it started in August 2021.

Walk-In Items: Bob L reached out to engineers for determining the lot lines for the property at the end of Natures Way. Chair MG wanted to make sure they pin out the left side of the lot front and back of the lot.

Ray B said a bridge at the end of Moose Pond has one bid and working on a 2nd-3rd. Bob L is waiting for a bid from Mike Taylor. He was expecting to see the numbers, but he didn't. Linda asked where the bridge is located on Moose Pond. It is on the forest side of Moose Pond. Bob L feels we are responsible for it if it is on townland. Back and forth with members. Will wait for quotes. Paul G wanted to mention it was Charlene (BOS member) who he went on a site walk with. Paul G updated us on the permit he is working on. He also confirmed that Eric Radloff (town forester) does charge for site walks, but he feels the money would be worth having him and Matt Tarr for a site walk at Merriam. He wanted to make a motion to budget \$400 for this. Bob L



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feels like a waste of time. They agreed that there is no need for Eric to give a talk if Merriam Farm was not the location. However, Linda sees it as an educational opportunity similar to the ones done at Gumpas and Cutter Merriam. This is part of what Forestry does. Chair MG did mention bylaws have an outline and will send a copy out to each member. He also has a receipt for \$13 for stamps. He would like something in the bylaws for petty cash.

Adjourn: 9:09PM (Vote: motion to adjourn meeting Bob L, second Ray B G 5-0)