



TOWN OF PELHAM

6 Village Green
Pelham, NH 03076

PELHAM FORESTRY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES – **APPROVED**

MONDAY
05/22/23
7PM-9:28pm

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 both the FC meeting on 04/20/23 & FC site-walk on 04/25/23 (Vote: motion Paul G to accept the meeting minutes. Second Ray B Yes - 5 & No -0)

Open Forum: With many in the crowd Mike G mentioned he would time each for maximum of 3 minutes. Beth Jussaume – Was on site-walk & was for putting a bridge in the area we discussed. She mentioned she saw what she said was ATV damage but didn't mention she witnessed an ATV. She would support a gate. Alicia Hennessey met with neighbors on Natures Way because they were concerned about the opening. Stated the Fire Department wanted them removed. She mentioned one of the boulders was removed today. She said one person she spoke with said ATV's were back there the day earlier (no name given of the person) buzzing around. She said "they" would prefer a gate and was there to express their opinion (no paperwork provided with names). She was also for a gate. Said the land was bought with townspeople along with the state. John Picard asked if we received his email. Mike G confirmed we did but was only hours ago. He handed out the email to members. Wanted to open a discussion with his concerns over the past few years. He is upset and wants the forests to be opened for everyone to enjoy. He is concerned about emergency vehicles getting back there. He said he hears ATV's hardly ever. He doesn't feel blocking off every trail because someone "might" go down them. Again, brought up the need to stop the barriers so multiple ways to enjoy can get out there. Felt it is getting ridiculous. He asked for our thoughts. Mike G mentioned we would take all public comments, absorb and if we need to add to a future agenda and that there might be some items tonight, we tackle. He said he has spent a lot of time on the trails enjoying them and maintaining them. Bob L did respond saying that you can beat us up, but this was from previous board members. Many of the items were "set in motion to this point". Mr. Picard understood. Mike G said we will be discussing some of the items during the meeting tonight. Reiterated the gates have to stop and that there is no requirement to lock Class VI trails. Matthew Fisher is an abutter to Class A trail on Spaulding/Gumpas Hill area formerly a class VI. He agreed with Mr. Picard about being locked out of this area. He mentioned that a gate that abuts his property has a gate



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lock that has been changed & not given to him. He said he cannot access any gates to any of his properties. Regarding the Class VI road he said he is not sure when the landowners were contacted before the warrant article or before the vote. Not all landowners were contacted and mentioned his family (cousins) were not and that he was the only one. He wanted to make sure the board understood that this was part of his gripe. He presented a picture of a “supposed target” up in the Spaulding Hill area (he believed) that he said was shown to Conservation Committee in November 2022 & believes to the BOS a week later by Paul Gagnon. Mr. Fisher said that this picture was presented as the reason the 30-acre fire had begun. He felt there was nothing in the picture that was burnt. Then presented another photo of what appeared to be a burnt forest from the blue trail that connects Spaulding Hill to Tower Hill. James Fisher presented us with a wooden sign he made and would like to make more for trail heads and trails. Mike G asked if they were modeled after Hudson NH and he said they were. He gave it to us. Mike G said we would discuss it. Bob L asked what would be best to coordinate & thought process. Mr. Fisher felt Spaulding Hill and/or Gumpas would be good places to start but said anywhere would be fine with him. He suggested the Long Trail in different sections and try it out. Suggested a 4X4 attached to the ground. He then said the two previous speakers that he agreed with them 100% on the gates, rocks, gate codes. He had them and was taken away. He feels he should have all 3 of the gate codes to access his property. He lived there his whole life and doesn't like to be “shut out”. He respects that whole area and feels it is an insult to have this happen. He feels it was taken over for one reason only and that's for walking and doesn't find that right. Brought up the vote on Class VI road warrant article and said he has neighbors who were notified in the early fall of 2021 & he was never notified. Mr. Fisher said that Paul G and him talked about this. Paul G said that abutters were not notified a long time before Mr. Fisher. Paul G said he acknowledged that & acknowledged in his presence & apologized for that but said you have to do things “one at a time” & wasn't months before. Mr. Fisher said you met people in person but you never notified me. Pointed out he has all the email correspondence from 2021 to present. Paul G then started to tell him about the gate codes which was a conversation that had prior and that we would be discussing it later in the meeting. He went on to say that at one time Forestry controlled all gates/codes until one day a gate had been cut off and someone put their own lock on it so we changed all the codes, FC maintained the codes. Paul G said he and Nick Murphy (Pelham Fire Department) drove around the whole town on a UTV. They found two gates unlocked and the Fire Chief said “That's it, these gate codes aren't going to be controlled by FC any longer” and the fire chief took control of who would have them. Paul G said he doesn't have them & no one here knows the gate codes. He went on to say we cannot give Mr. Fisher the gate codes because it is a safety issue because nobody kept the gate codes “secret enough”. Paul G said he complaining to the wrong people. He then asked Mr. Fisher what is not allowed on the trails (because he said we only allow hikers). Mr. Fisher gave an example of the Gumpas Pond parking area where there is less than a foot of access. Mike G interjected saying they are well over the 3 minutes and that this is going nowhere. He asked if he had anything else to add that he would offer another 30 seconds. Mr. Fisher pointed out again he was never notified. He pointed out a neighbor was. A conversation that happened earlier in the lobby and had two reasons he didn't reach out to him. The first was he didn't have his number (which Mr. Fisher said no way) & second he was afraid to contact him. Thanked us for his time. Bob L chimed in and said



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Mr. Fisher was 100% right that he and his family should have the codes because it was in the language. Mr. Picard came back up saying “you mean to tell me that the fire chief dictates how we get into the forests”. John Laroche said was his first meeting and asked if there was a group/committee about getting involved. He asked if it would be more organized. Mike G said he plans to have this as part of his plan. He said that he would be very interested in getting involved where Mike G thanked him and said we would be in touch. Dave Hennessy said he felt the town has a lot of confusion. Stated he recently took a class (third time) and suggested anyone contact the planning department for the zoom link. He said Class VI cannot be locked and cannot be maintained. He said the zoom links are boring but good information. Bob L thanked him. Michelle Cooke is for gates and locking the town to preserve the forest. She is not anti-quad. She is for moving the rocks so safety can get in there and neighbors. She felt the puddles are caused by ATV's. Beth Jussaume came back up to agree with Mr. Fisher about how tight it is at the gate in question. She admitted getting her bike in that area is very tight, she felt it would be tough for a horse. She felt the police have quick access to gates.

Discussion on Treasurer: Mike G said in the previous meeting that there were legal opinions that we shouldn't have someone as a treasurer who is not appointed by the BOT. He handed out all numbers from Chris Gallaher. He would like to open up for discussion. Mike G felt he likes everything that Chris G is doing but that he is the liaison from FC to the town treasurer. He would be the one to send it along (suggested CC'ing all members). Bob L pointed out that Mike G started out speaking about treasurer and not the secretary. Members OK to continue. Ray B stated Chris G does a great job and would be comfortable to continue doing budget and visibility for the FC. Ray said this was the first time he had seen her work and mentioned the transparency. Linda said she would like to keep it the way it is. She said no one has ever asked for the report but said she could be asked at any time. She said if Mike G is ok with the extra step then she would be OK to remain the way it is. Mike G said based on conversations with the town he wants to just simplify, offered to others to consider doing it. He likes he work and just wants to be the liaison to the town. Paul G felt the town attorney response was moot because there is no treasurer. He said we have been doing the same thing for 20 years. Bob L jumped in saying he has requested the financials many times in the past. Paul G then said if Mike G wants to insert himself between Chris and the town he said “I guess go ahead” but he sees it as another layer of bureaucracy and would slow things down, but he was OK with it. He again said Chris does a fine job. Paul said the FC has found errors from the town. Bob L said he wasn't sure he agrees with the legal sense (being moot). Paul G gave an example of how the process would work and still feels would slow things up. Ray B likes her to continue to draft recordkeeping feels that an appointment member should really handle it. Mike G felt it be best it falls on him. He is not looking to take away anything she is doing other than send her emails to him and he will send to the town. Linda said she felt it should be left alone. Bob L understood the accountability and made a motion to run it through Mike G. Linda said the process was changed since he was appointed to make sure we have minutes attached showing money was approved. Mike G again said he was appointed and that he should be the one to be accountable. He does not want to change anything Chris G is doing other than send emails to me instead of directly to the town treasurer. (Vote: motion Bob L Emails with bookkeeping to run from Chris G run through Mike



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G Second Ray B Yes – 3 from Bob L, Ray B & Mike G & No -2 Paul G & Linda Irish-Simpson)

Discussion on Secretary: Mike G mentioned last meeting Stefanie Cote said she would consider being secretary but about an hour before the meeting she emailed him and wanted to withdraw her name. Mike G said he had heard from several others who may be interested and nothing to be voted on. Mike G will continue to do the meeting minutes.

Trail Camera Update: Nick Spanos said he was planning on moving the camera. Mentioned a lot of backlash so held off. He wasn't sure what to do. He wants to save us money but isn't sure what to do. Discussions were carried on between all members regarding cameras, are they needed, can the police use any of the information. Paul G suggested we ask the police to come to our next meeting & they can tell us what they do with our data. He felt it was used to get an idea how often & when people drive by. Bob L said he would like to hear more from the public. He has read emails about those for and against cameras. He directed to the camera to please chime in. He said he got a lot of calls about people not wanting cameras. Paul G said he would like a vote to at the very least to remove the camera that was promised to be moved months earlier & also asked Bob L to ask someone from the police department to come speak at the next meeting if they are of any value. (Vote: Motion Paul G to have Nick Spanos to remove the camera as discussed at our last meeting. Linda Irish-Simpson second. Yes 5-0). Mr. Spanos is OK with removing and he will hold onto it.

Natures Way Site-Walk: Mike G stated that earlier that day the boulders were not removed and that one boulder was staggered but does leave enough room for Police and Fire UTV to fit. Ray B informed that he felt water can flow through there and was at that time but said within the next 30-60 days. He felt a puncheon bridge would suffice. Linda felt with it being in a wetland something should be done. Paul G agreed with Ray B and felt a foot bridge would be acceptable but felt some gravel be brought in on the other two depressions. Bob L said he has a lot of experience in that area and doesn't see a lot of significant change. He questioned it being a wetland area and concerned about us doing something that could get us in trouble. He felt the area now is not that wet and agreed with puncheon bridge. He is worried about the two bridges in the trail and trusses are weak and 20-year-old bridges. Would like to discuss the idea of replacing/rebuilding them. Linda wasn't sure about the wetland. She said on NRPC they designated that area a wetland and wasn't sure if it was NRPC or scientists. She just wasn't sure. Ray B gave opinion. (Vote: Motion Bob L for a puncheon bridge off to either the right or the left. Ray B second. Yes 5-0).

Bob L asked about the other two bridges. Mike G ok for a site-walk. Agreed Wednesday May 31st 5PM. Meet at the end of Natures Way. Linda discussed about communication we received at the end of Natures Way and would be in favor of a gate and if not a good reason to be given. Bob L read emails on pros and cons & asked if we could have public comment. Mike G said we already had that opportunity in open forum. He said he got a lot of calls about gates. Linda questioned where the details are on these people. Mike G said he forwarded all emails he received. Mike G reiterated the agenda was posted as per regulations and if someone didn't make



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the beginning of the meeting he is sorry for that, but we have passed that part of the meeting. Ray B commented on his thoughts about the abutters stating they have not seen anyone driving into that area. Paul G said the fire department requested a gate. If we do not add a gate then we must keep an eye on it. (Vote: Motion Bob L No Gate added at the end of Natures Way. Ray B second. Yes – 4 from Bob L, Ray B, Paul G & Mike G & No -1 Linda Irish-Simpson)

eBikes Discussion: Ray B discussion with Pelham PD. They had no complaints of any bikes or eBikes. Paul G added discussion from Linda on some literature from the City of Lebanon. He brought up a few other towns. Ray B felt the towns banning class 3 bikes have rail trails where Pelham does not. Bob L feels we should address if/when we have a problem. He would like to not have any decisions made at this time. Linda felt we should make a decision and move on. (Vote: Motion Ray B We do not exclude any of the 3 bike classes in town. Bob L second. Yes – 4 from Bob L, Ray B, Linda Irish-Simpson & Mike G & No -1 Paul G)

Blueberry Circle Land: Bob L asked Paul G about acreage and said about 60 acres. Bob L talked a bit about the area. It was discussed that this could be an area we have a parking lot, kiosk, and grand opening. It was also brought up that this might be an area Mr. Fisher could have his new wooden signs in.

Site-walks: Linda felt it would be great to do some site-walks to check out areas where timber harvests were done to see how it is adapting.

Bylaws: Heather Corbett Stated she has an outline and as time goes by we can all discuss ideas for bylaws.

Gates and Key Codes: Mike G had a situation where a tree had fallen in the Spaulding area. He reached out and Nick Spanos volunteered to cut it up but getting the key code for the gate to make things easier for removal was extremely challenging. Paul G chimed in saying he is not in favor of knowing the codes. He felt it creates more headaches with the more people who know them. Paul said he went out riding with Nick Murphy. A gate was unlocked, and Nick reported it back to the fire chief who was upset & he took responsibility for the gate codes. Ray B commented about his years of experience with trail maintenance. He felt as the board evolved, he felt lack of trust and concerned him. He doesn't feel someone not appointed to the FC should not be the only person with the codes (Mike G said police and fire have them). Paul G felt complete opposite. He suggested we just make a motion and see what we agree on. Bob L said he met with Joe Rorke T/A a couple times over who has control. T/A contacted town counsel and was told that FC, not police and fire have control. He went on to say that OHRV advisory board sent a letter that prompted the fire and police about safety concerns. Linda said she does not want the codes & that one person should have the codes. Bob L said he saw the language that the abutters should have them. He pointed out that Mr. Fisher should have the codes for his area and Paul G said he is not an abutter. (noise in from the public). He then brought up his conversation again with TA on who does and does not have the power. He went on to say he has a problem with Mr. Zahn about being the gate keeper. Paul G said he is not the gate keeper. He was asked by the fire



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chief to put temporary locks on the gates when jobs were being done. Gave example of how it works. He is helping the fire chief. Paul G said it is not Brian Z's responsibility to give the code out he was instructed by the fire chief to not give the code out. Bob L said FC should be the gatekeepers and not somebody not appointed. He said he would go see the fire chief the next day & go over this with him. Bob went on to say again that based on the information he got from town counsel via T/A that FC is in control of the gates. He was going by what he was told. Bob L made a motion that 5 members have access to the codes including fire and police. Ray B second. Paul G asked who is going to decide who gets the codes. Mike G said he would like Bob L to speak with the fire chief before he votes on this motion and bring it back up in a future meeting. Mike G mentioned a conversation he had with Town manager about asking for keycodes and Town Manager brought up a story from a few weeks earlier asking the fire chief for codes and the fire chief said "I don't know what they are they changed them again" Mike G went on to say he felt that was a big problem and other people should need to know other than 1 person. He was surprised he could not get the codes with a polite call. No vote on this. Bob L to speak with the police and fire chief. Ray B clarifying he feels members of the FC should have access to codes if/when needed. Paul G said all codes are in every fire truck. Mike G would like to get an answer from town counsel on abutters and codes. This will be carried over.

Walk-In Items: Linda shout out to the library for the hike challenge and will be spotlight in the Evergreen. Bob L purchased a trophy to present to Tim Kennedy for his volunteering on trail work. Bob L also like to get a perpetual type plaque where we can add names to it for years of work to forestry. He would like us all to ask for names but not in public to make it a surprise. We will need permission from the BOS. Paul G let us know the permit he presented got rejected, He called Shayne Gendron, will be more money but didn't have a number yet. Mike G presented a wooden sign made by Mr. Fisher stating special thanks to Tim Kennedy. This will be hung in the area where he just finished an extensive volunteer project.

Adjourn: 9:28PM (Vote: motion to adjourn meeting Bob L, second Paul G 5-0)