**Lancaster Conservation Commission (LCC) Meeting Minutes**
**Town Hall Second Floor – March 13, 2023**

**LCC Members present:** Racheal Stuart, Kim Votta, Vickie Gibbs, Sam Mayne, Kathy-Jean Lavoie, Nancy Southworth

**LCC Members Absent:** Troy Merner

**Others present:** Ben Gaetjens-Oleson, Margy Hobbs, Heidi Chester

**Initial Business:** Stuart called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Introductions were waived (all attendees previously acquainted).

**Approval of minutes:**
Lavoie suggested a change to February minutes, to clarify that Stuart had issued an official resignation letter to Town Manager Ben Gaetjens-Oleson. Chester made the edit.

*Mayne made a motion to approve the February 13, 2023 minutes with change as noted. Southworth seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

**LCC Workplan Topics:**

No Mow May (Lavoie)
Lavoie stated she has received an acceptable printing estimate, selected a design & is prepared to proceed with production of lawn signs for No Mow May. Target date for sign distribution among town participants is April 22 (Earth Day). She estimated costs for No Mow May to be less than $500.

*Gibbs made a motion to approve expenditure of up to $500 from the education portion of LCC budget; seconded by Mayne. Motion carried unanimously.*

NFC Trails Project Update (Stuart/Gibbs)
Stuart reported a hike of existing & proposed trail areas that afternoon with Gibbs & AMC representatives. Gibbs presented a map of the Town Forest trail network, surrounding roads & access points. She stated in many areas, improvements can be simply made using hand tools & by posting clear signage, while other areas may require more extensive work using machinery. AMC will be facilitating the trail work using their volunteers/providers. Gibbs estimated the trail network to be approx. 4 miles in combined length. Stuart stated the NFC funding is primarily focused on improving access from the village. Gibbs reported that official right-of-way access across some parcels along Heritage Trail is still in progress.

2023 Workplan (Stuart)
Stuart presented a chart listing seven LCC priorities with corresponding timelines, current status & leading LCC member(s). Members offered suggestions & updates. Mayne suggested 2023 easement monitoring be in summer rather than fall; he also noted the Riparian Restoration Project will consider other grants, as permanence of protection is yet to be determined & total cost will exceed what ARM Fund would cover. Regarding Town engagement, Gaetjens-Oleson noted he will provide support with communication & continuity between LCC & Selectboard. Lavoie noted that landowner permissions will be the focus in 2023 for ongoing invasive knotweed education/eradication. Stuart plans to incorporate the feedback, then upload to shared server for future LCC reference. While her resignation as LCC Member/Chairperson goes into effect March 31, Stuart noted a desire to continue her involvement with Town Forest issues as a volunteer working with Gibbs and other LCC members; she also

offered to act as volunteer contact for the Weeks Public Library/Humanities Council program. The board expressed gratitude for her continued support.

LCC Membership Recruitment and Leadership Transition
Stuart reported meeting with two potential LCC member candidates; they had no conflict of interest, but due to other priorities, neither candidate could commit at this time. Stuart encouraged each LCC member to propose one new member candidate by May. The suggested new member should meet two criteria: broad compatibility with LCC and our mission & at least one applicable skill.

Votta said she plans to renew as Vice Chairperson but is not prepared to step up as Chairperson. She will act as interim Chairperson of next meeting, set for May. Lavoie will act as interim Chairperson for June meeting. April meeting was cancelled due to forecasted lack of quorum. Chester agreed to receive items individually from LCC members in order to compose an agenda before each meeting. She'll post the agenda to LCC members for review, then send to Town Manager Gaetjens-Oleson for public posting the week prior.

As possible solutions to maintaining continuity, the group discussed members acting as Chairperson in a monthly rotation & the designation of alternates to the LCC.

**Other Business:**

Treasurer's Update on 2023 LCC Budget (Lavoie)
Lavoie reminded members that the LCC 2023 Budget approval is slated for the following day at Town Meeting, March 14.

NH Association of Conservation Commissions Letter (NHACC) (Stuart)
Stuart reported the NHACC requested a signed/returned letter of support in opposition of a bill proposing the removal of state-required licensure for ecological service providers who will instead be licensed by a national board. She shared the NHACC letter for review & consideration. Gaetjens-Oleson suggested a separate letter from the LCC. Members discussed implications of signing the NHACC letter versus sending a self-composed LCC letter of opposition (to be written by Stuart).

*Mayne made a motion to sign the NHACC letter as is; Gibbs seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Gibbs moved to also send an LCC letter of opposition; Lavoie seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

*Mayne moved to adjourn; Gibbs seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:41 pm.*

Respectfully submitted, Heidi Chester

Approved May 8, 2023

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Kim Votta, Vice Chair Kathy-Jean Lavoie, Treasurer