

MEETING MINUTES
Belmont Conservation Commission
April 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting via Zoom Meeting
7:00 pm

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TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: April 1, 2021
TIME: 8:40 AM

Attendees:

Members: James Roth (Chair); Jeff North (Vice Chair); Miriam Weil; Christopher Morris; Peg Velie; Dan Nolan; Mark Smith (Associate)

Others: Ara Yogurtian (host)

Call to Order:

The Meeting was Called to Order at 7:30 pm, due to technical issues with the remote conferencing.

Discussion: Rock Meadow Recap

Social distancing; meadow crowing; and unleashed dogs continue to plague Rock Meadow. Mary Trudeau reported on recent conversations between herself, the Belmont Police Department, Patrice Garvin (Town Administrator) and the Animal Control Officer, Suzanne Trasavage. She noted that unleashed dogs continue to be problematic, despite the periodic presence of Ms Trasavage. The Belmont Police Department has installed a temporary message board in Rock Meadow, and has used their facebook page to urge social distancing and dog leashing.

Dan Nolan noted that he visits the meadow 4-5 times a week, and that weekend traffic is worse than weekday visitation. He reported that numbers seemed better this week. He also suggested installing signage with the Town logo to emphasize the regulations. He noted that there is little or no signage at Brookside Avenue, and no signage at the Beaver Brook crossing from Waltham. Christopher Morris noted that we could consider fines for dog violations, and that new signage should be posted. He also agreed with the BPD measures to restrict parking on Mill Street, and noted that the right hand side of the access drive should be open, as well.

Mary reported that her conversations with the BPD have included discussions on parking and safety along Mill Street. She also noted that Suzanne Trasavage has been a consistent presence on weekends, and is working to enforce leashing. Mary also noted that fines of up to \$500 dollars, for repeat violations, can be issued for leashing violations.

The Commission discussed the increased usage, noting that multi generational recreational opportunities are a positive opportunity during the pandemic, but that the current conflicts between dogs; mountain bikers; and pedestrians are concerning. The Commission noted their commitment to keeping the Meadow open and accessible to residents of Belmont, but noted that safety and observance of public health interests is key to the Meadow remaining a public

resource. The Commission noted that dissemination of information, including parking and leashing regulations was important, and that reaching out to the local media would be helpful. New signage is needed, and the Commission asked Mary Trudeau to pursue this task. The Commission also noted that the Belmont Police Department is the regulator of traffic and parking on Mill Street, and asked Mary to convey the support of the Commission for more controlled access to Rock Meadow.

Jeff North reported that usage is slightly more controlled on Lone Tree Hill, but that social distancing measures are not uniformly observed. Mary Trudeau reported that path mowing will be increased to eight (8) foot widths throughout Rock Meadow and Lone Tree Hill this summer.

The Commission discussed the conflicts between a sincere desire to keep Rock Meadow open, and the need to enforce the rules and regulations governing public use of the open space. Noting that use of Rock Meadow needs to protect the natural resources of the passive recreational area, the Commission stated that use of the Meadow must be done safely, and respectfully.

Based on a motion duly made and seconded, the Commission

VOTED “The Belmont Conservation Commission supports keeping Rock Meadow open for use and enjoyment. The Commission supports increased enforcement of current parking violations; dog leash violations; dog feces pick up violations; and the promotion of social distancing for the purpose of preserving the environment at Rock Meadow.”

Capstone Project:

Jeff North reminded the Commission that the Northeastern students will be presenting their Capstone project, via ZOOM, at 10:15 on Wednesday April 15, 2020.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Commission **VOTED** to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:40 pm