

**Freedom Conservation Commission &
Forest Advisory Committee
Joint Meeting
Tuesday, 18 April, 2023
7:00 pm
Freedom Town Hall**

MINUTES

1. Quorum Check, Roll Call – The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm. Present are:
FAC – R.A. Oram, Jeff Nicoll, Linda Mailhot, Paul Elie, Alice Custard, Michele Keenan, Sue Hoople
FCC – Janet Johnson, Ron Newbury, Les Babb-Select Board Representative, Sean Coriaty,
Rob Cunio – Fire Department
Brian Taylor – Planning Board
Barry Keith – B.H. Keith Associates – Town Forester
Ned Kucera - FAISC
2. Approval of 21 March 2023 FCC Meeting Minutes – Alice made a motion to approve, Sue seconded. APPROVED
3. Approval of 01 March 2023 FAC Meeting Minutes– Janet made a motion to approve, Sean seconded. APPROVED
4. Freedom Fire Chief presentation to the Commission/Committee on fire and medical emergency procedures in the town forest – Rob Cunio – Thankful to everyone who participated in the Forest project. Map and Compass program will be held in the Town Forest. The parking area will be the staging area for the project. Surrounding mutual aid departments will be invited. The FAC has an event application form that Jeff will forward to Rob.
If there was to be a fire, the department has two F-550s, a UTV, and a military surplus vehicle that will fit through the gates.
EMS - there are a 6 person UTV and a heated rescue sled that can be used.
A helicopter can be landed on the “airstrip” if necessary.
The Fire Department is appreciative of the Scrub Oak Scramblers for their trail maintenance and access.
The mutual aid and this department are able to cover a large fire if needed. The State will coordinate with local departments to determine if they need to send additional resources.

Meet with Dave George regarding the GPS Coordinates. Hold another work session?

The Green Mountain Fire Tower is funded for weekends this year.

There is a boring machine at the Freedom Market.

Rob will ask about having a community compass class.

5. Election of officers for FCC/FAC

FAC – will stay with what they have from last fall. Janet J. nominated herself and Janet Meyers as Chair and Vice Chair, Ron seconded. APPROVED

Yvonne Hoyt is nominated as a new member of the FAC. Janet will have her fill out the application. Janet made a motion that the FAC vote to accept Yvonne Hoyt as a new member, Ron seconded. APPROVED

FCC – Paul nominated Jeff Nicoll as Chair, Oram seconded. APPROVED

Paul nominated as Oram as Vice Chair, Linda seconded. APPROVED

6. Review of Town Forester work plan and approval of contract – Barry invited both the Committee and the Commission to come out to see the work that is being done when there is a cut in the Town Forest. Photos for publicity are suggested.

The contract expires in a week. Barry provided an overview of his rate (which has increased) but has been budgeted for. One of the questions is about how the timber sale is treated. The contract provided is at 15% plus additional fees for supplies, etc.

Timber sale detail – distributed a summary of the work to be done. (Airstrip side) This is a continuation of the work that was done several years ago. From the crushed gravel pile to the western boundary, down to the Lake Road. That will finish the work in Compartment 3. Between Lead Mine Road and Trout Pond Trail is another area that is being worked on. A third area (to be seen) will be associated with the Pitch Pine/Scrub Oak barrens. The burn plan is coming, a joint meeting with The Nature Conservancy will be scheduled. This area will be in preparation for the burn they will do.

Selection Improvement cutting is prescribed. This process was explained.

There is a white oak in the forest that is 4-5 feet in diameter. Den trees and mass trees were explained. There will also be some patch clear cuts. This is to increase the aspen component in the forest.

The cut will be in mid-late summer and early fall depending on contractor, weather conditions.

An estimate of revenue is \$10-\$15K per area. A wetlands filing will need to be done for the crossings of the wetlands.

Barry explained why the work has not gone out to bid in the past.

The chip, board and pulp slips will be required.

Task 1 – continuation of the harvest. Is this under contract time and materials, or is it in the timber sales agreement. Task 1 is with the timber sale agreement.

It is not included with the budget for the scope of work. Remove task 1 from the contracted hourly agreement. It is to be based on timber services agreement. Future sales – estimates have been done. Within the next ten years, we could probably net \$100-\$125K. The money is mostly in Compartment One.

GPS – Mark larger trees – future project. ID cellar holes and historic features better.

Info regarding the grant from Forest Service was distributed. Check \$5000 from the Town of Freedom regarding it's match for the burn process.

Jeff made a motion to: Revise task 1 to state that it will be covered under a separate agreement, and to revise Exhibit B – hourly rate to \$75. Alice seconded. APPROVED

7. FCC Rules of Procedure Update – The new language is in Article 4 section 1 and 2. Article 5 Section 11 was also updated. The back page was updated with current member list. Per the stewardship plan, a planning board member must be on the FAC. Any changes would have to be approved by the State. The stewardship plan also indicates that the FCC person shall have voting rights. These topics were tabled until the next meeting to rewind some of the edits.

8. Water quality testing discussion – Last month we discussed a shortfall in the funding for Green Mountain's Water Quality Testing Program. Explore other options – Jeff attended the Board of Selectmen meeting and was referred to the Town Administrator to see if there were gift accounts that could make up the shortfall. There is \$194.70 in the FCC gift account that can be used toward the balance. There is also a warrant on March 8, 2008 which puts 50% of the land use change tax to a conservation account. The current balance is \$32,562.12. The Conservation Commission is allowed to expend these funds without approval at Town Meeting.
Sue would like to expand the testing to include PFAS and micro plastics testing. Revisit this at the next meeting. Jeff made a motion to disperse funds from the Conservation Land Use Change Tax account (\$1483.80) for the purpose of water quality testing. Paul seconded. APPROVED
Jeff made a motion to disperse 194.70 from the FCC gift account for the purpose of water quality testing. Michele seconded. Oram has concerns about those funds being a gift for land and water, not just water. No stipulations were found regarding the use of the gift funds. APPROVED Ask Green Mountain for their next year's proposal by October.

9. FAC Town Forest Tour discussion – Good to go on the 29th of April. There has been a lot of interest. Ron, Janet and Janet will be doing 5 mile, 3 mile, and one mile trips. There is no scheduled rain date, the walk is rain or shine. Another walk will be scheduled for the fall, on a Sunday. Janet J. had Freedom Town Forest stickers as a gift to anyone who attends the walk. Donations of \$1 are being accepted. T-shirt draft version was distributed in the packet. Jeff will

share the link, anyone who goes to the walk that wants a T-shirt can order directly.

10. Town Forest Signage and Maps – The kiosk maps are done and available to be hung up. Jeff will get maps printed for Janet's walk. Ron feels that they go through approximately 200-250 maps a year.

11. Approval of invoices - none

12. Other business to come before the commission -

Public Comment –

Ned Kucera – here for Loon Lake Association testing – this is all set? Yes, it is. Ned also asked about budgeting for the next year, and Jill said she is able to do so.

Linda made a motion to adjourn at 9:22 pm, Alice seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Donaldson
Recording Secretary

Note: Deadline for agenda items for this meeting closed at 12pm on April 11, 2023