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Rines Forest Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 24, 2011

Town Hall

7:00 P.M.

Present: Henry Milburn, Bob Heyner, Bob Waterhouse, Greg McCarthy, Bruce Wildes, Warren Graumann, and Councilor Moriarty

Absent: Lisa Judd, Mitch Elliott, Sally Stockwell, Jennifer West, and Councilor Porter

Staff: Bill Shane, Town Manager, Anne Brushwein, Recording Secretary

I. Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Approval of the Minutes: The minutes of the September 30, 2010 meeting were unanimously accepted.

III. Post-Harvest Overview- Jay Braunscheidel: Jay discussed the two harvest operations that took place in December and January. The first phase was the small hand-cut operation run by Steve Westcott in the southern area of the forest, and the second phase was the large mechanical operation with the chipper, in the northeast area. Thirty-four acres were treated with the hand crew, and fifty-six acres were treated with the mechanical operation. According to Jay, the total area treated was thirty acres less than he originally envisioned, due to the wetness of the ground, and that one area that he had flagged for harvesting had considerably less red pine and buckthorn than he thought would be there.

Net revenue from the harvest was \$14,896.00, which will be used for invasives control. There was a total of 1,898 tons harvested, or 60 loads of wood. The volume removal per acre by the hand cut crew was 17.5 tons per acre, and by the mechanical crew was 23.2 tons per acre. Jay said that he would provide a handout showing all the statistics of the harvest which will be included in the minutes.(see attached)

- **Challenges and Planned Trail Repair** – Bob Waterhouse asked about the wheel rut damage that someone had called about, in the area near his property line. Jay explained that it was a very wet area, and once the skidder got in there, it got bogged down and had to ease his way out, leaving a short section with some ruts. Harvesting in that area was suspended given the saturated soil conditions. Jay has no recommendation now as to how the buckthorn in that area can be addressed, but hopes to have an answer by the fall Committee meeting. However, Jay pointed out that with a limited budget for buckthorn control, in order to get the most “bang for the buck”, invasives control should be applied in areas that have healthy soils, and the extremely wet areas may not be the best place to start.

As requested, Jay had a bypass trail cut in the area of Dale Rines’ property boundary so that hikers would not cut across Mr. Rines’ land. The machine cut left a few small stumps that can be cut with brush saws.

Jay said that he will be doing a close-out inspection once the snow is completely gone. At that time he will identify areas that need repair following the harvest ie. stream crossings, rutted areas, and landing area re-seeding. His company and the contractors will pay for and perform the needed repairs, and he will also identify areas not impacted by the harvest that might need work and will inform the committee of those areas. Jay said that the harvest sites will be audited in May for the FSC certification, and he will keep the Committee informed and notified of the results. There is no cost at this time to the Town for the certification.

Invasives – Control Schedule for 2011 Spring/Fall– The next major step will be the control of invasive plants. Phase One will be additional mechanical control using brush saws in the spring and early summer, allow the buckthorn to sprout and then control it with herbicides in September. When asked about the toxicity of the herbicide, Jay said that it was relatively benign, and the Forest could be entered 24 hours after treatment. Bruce asked if the buckthorn control should target the 15 acres that are heavily infested but could not be harvested due to the wet soil. He was concerned that if the buckthorn in that area was not controlled, it would continue to spread. Jay said that given the budget of \$14,896.00, only about 20 acres of the entire Forest can be treated, so they have to decide which areas will have a better chance for successful control. According to Jay, ballpark estimates for both brush saw and herbicide control are \$300.00 per acre, but that was before the harvest and he will be able to get better numbers later this spring. Bill will send all the information out to the committee members as soon Jay sends it to him. Jay pointed out that buckthorn control will be an ongoing problem, so the Committee might want to look into grant programs for future funding. The Presumpscot Watershed Program has grant money available and Jay offered to work with the committee on writing a grant proposal. Bob Heyner said that the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District also has a grant writer on staff. Bruce said he would bring this to the Lands Trust Committee as well.

Bill Shane thanked Jay for the great work that was done and said that he never received any complaints from the public throughout the process.

- IV. Work Party and/or Community Walk Schedules:** Bruce reported that there was a lighter than expected turnout for the snowshoe event this year, but that those who were there hiked the White Trail primarily, and had a great time. The Committee decided to wait until the September meeting to set a date for a Community Walk through the forest. Bruce said that the Lands Trust newsletter will have an article about the Rines Forest Harvest and that the Lands Trust Committee will take part in the Community Walk as well. The Community walk will probably take place in October.

Bill suggested having a Public Works crew go into the Forest and re-paint the tree-blaze markers in September or October, before they fade too much, and before the weather turns cold.

- V. Other Business** – Bruce mentioned that there is a need for bridges at a couple of places along the White Trail and near the entrance to the Forest. Bill said that we would generate a work order so that Public Works can take care of building and installing two, possibly three, bridges.

The **next meeting** of the Rines Forest Advisory committee will be held **Thursday, September 22, 2011** at 7:00 p.m..

- VI. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anne L. Brushwein, Recording Secretary