

JOHNSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 19, 2026

Present: Lois Frey, Sue Lovering, Noel Dodge, Dean Locke, Adrian Schmidt, Justin Hennard

Absent: Peter Hammond

Guest: Mollie Flanagan

GOMO AND THE LONG TRIAL

Mollie joined us for a discussion about and a proposal to give the Green Mountain Club a twenty- to thirty-foot-wide easement along the Long Trail where it crosses Gomo. There are presently 4.5 miles of unprotected trail left, after 100+ legal transactions by the Club for easements. 1500 feet of that is on the western edge of Gomo. We all agreed that this is a necessary step.

It will ensure longevity of the trail by protecting against selling the property and make obtaining funds easier. The Club will cover all expenses and take care of trail maintenance, which includes re-blazing trees, cutting brush, removing downed trees, maintaining water bars, and hiring professional trail crews to do stone steps, etc, as needed. A Long Trail Corridor, not part of the easement, would be 500' on each side of the trail kept pristine for looks.

Our concerns were:

- Would it impact a possible logging operation? If we were to do logging, would we be able to use the parking lot as a landing? Mollie assured us that if needs arise, we will work together to accommodate changes. Noel asked that the agreement specify use of the parking area.
- Noel suggested that the easement should be wider to accommodate wet areas, of which there are many. Mollie will ask about the possibility.
- We pointed out the fact that two boundaries are not surveyed and our inability to get the town to do it. Mollie mentioned the possibility of the GMC contributing some funds toward a survey.

The timeline for this project is flexible but the JCC and the Club agreed that we should go forward now. Mollie will send maps of the existing surveys and draw up a draft that we will tweak together. She will draft and send to Lois a letter of support to be signed before a legal document is created. In a month or two, we'll get onto the selectboard's agenda to present the plan.

POLLINATOR GARDENS

The signs will be installed on 4:00 on Tuesday, April 21st. They'll be mounted on two 4"x4"x8' pressure treated posts each and Justin has offered to dig the holes. Sue will order the lumber (six 8' 4x4s) from RK Miles, to be dropped in her yard and moved to Wescom on the day we install.

We'll plan a July garden party to show off our blooms and tell folks about pollinators and why they matter.

MARCH GLADNESS

Eric Nuse has decided that there's insufficient black ash in Johnson to warrant a project, so we settled on a new subject for a talk: birds. They're always a crowd magnet. Noel, also a crowd magnet, will give it and eventually decide what to say about them, hopefully before the day. It'll

be on Sunday, April 12, at 1:00. (Note: this date was originally set on the 19th, but changed a few days after this meeting.) Lois will check for availability of the municipal building.

At a later date, Adrian plans to give a demonstration/talk on growing mushrooms.

JOURNEY'S END UPDATE

The benches have been moved, demonstrating the need to anchor them. Adrian promises to do that as soon as the snow melts.

We decided that the trail should be marked with paint, since removing our flagging has been too much fun for hikers.

The price for the adjacent parcel for sale on Plot Rd. has been lowered to \$99K, so Lois sent the news to Remy/VRC in hopes to jumpstart a possible acquisition. They haven't been enthusiastic but will think about it.

FUTURE JCC PLANS

Adrian reports that the Rail Trail committee has a list of possible projects to come, so he will bring that to the next meeting. We can be advisors to those, on such things as fish passage, dam removal, etc., as well as remind them of the Land Management Review Form.

Sue wonders what we can do to advance land conservation with our pitiful funds and the answer is not much else besides education. It doesn't seem like enough.

We need to be thinking about what we want to see on the FEMA land that's becoming available. The first thing would be to plant trees.

We agree that we need to bolster the reserve fund. Aside from the mountain of classy stuff that Sue and Lois have gathered to sell for the fund, there were no suggestions on how to make that happen.

OBSERVATIONS and MISC

- Sue observed a pileated woodpecker flopping up and down on the end of a crabapple branch next to the Morrisville police station while eating wizened crabapples. (The woodpecker, not Sue)
- She also saw 44 turkeys at McLure's farm.
- The Long Trail was completed in 1930.
- Turkeys were calling at Noel's.
- There will be more whitetails hunted this fall, as does will be fair legal game.
- 6 holes? Justin is a nice guy. And not a bit nasty.
- Lois' home-made coconut, chocolate, almond cookies were divine. It would be a big omission not to mention that.

Adjourned at 8:25

Next meeting is on Thursday, April 16, 2026 at the municipal building.

Submitted by Sue Lovering, Secretary.