

Ashley Community Forest Board Meeting Notes - DRAFT

Thursday, 10/10/24

Justin Morrill Education Center, Strafford

In Attendance: David Paganelli, Erik Skarsten, Kevin Gish

1. Meeting called to order 6:05pm
2. Public Comments: None
3. Approval of previous minutes: Tabled until 11/14/24
4. Report on Parking Area Improvements: Work has been completed and was well done! Calvin Benjamin widened and resurfaced the main parking area, dug out holes for the main kiosk, placed large rocks to delineate the parking areas, made great improvements to the access road leading toward the upper parking area, and added water bars across the access trail leading up to the Sharon field. An invoice for services has not been received.
5. Forest Management Update: David has scheduled an onsite meeting with the logger, sawyer, and TimberHomes to discuss the proposed harvest sale of the Black Locust in Stand 3, White Ash in Stand 2, Miscellaneous Northern Hardwood logs, and firewood on 10/11/24. Acting as the Orange County Forester, David will draft a sale agreement to be reviewed by the ACF Board.
6. Report on Invasive Plant Work Day in September & Collaboration with Local High Schools in 2025: Significant progress was made during the September invasive management (pulling) day. We pulled primarily Barberry bushes uphill into the densest stand of Barberry bushes that have grown along an abandoned logging road / farm road. The plan is to start back up in the spring and summer of 2025. Discussion has begun with representatives from The Sharon Academy with hopes that a large group of students can assist with management of invasive plants. This plan will develop over the course of the winter and spring led by Erik and Annie.
7. Budget Information for Sharon:
 - a. A budget will be developed over the course of the next month (preferably before the next meeting in November) and be passed along to the towns of Sharon and Strafford for the Fiscal Year (FY) of 2026.
 - b. Included in FY2026 budget will be money set aside for repair to an abandoned stream crossing that was put in during a past logging operation (approximately 20 years ago). This is a state mandated correction with an estimated cost of \$4000.
 - c. Annie has successfully renewed the CD at a better rate.

- d. Donations for the Warren Johnston Memorial Bench will be made out to the Town of Strafford to be deposited into the Ashley Community Forest account.
8. Discussion of Signage and Population of Kiosk:
- a. Included in the enclosed space of the Kiosk will be:
 - i. A large format map of the area with designated trails will be developed with help from Windsor County Forester A.J. Follensbee. Estimated cost for a weather resistant material map to be printed is \$200 FY2026.
 - ii. Schedule of events.
 - iii. Photos of happenings in the forest.
 - iv. History of the parcel.
 - v. Welcome to ACF signage.
 - b. Included in the FY2026 budget will be a larger ACF entry sign to be located along the road before entering the parking area. Estimated cost will be \$500.
9. Next Meeting: 11/14/24 in the Town Offices of Sharon
10. Meeting Adjourned: 7:30pm