

Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 10, 2022
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

Commission Members Present:

Bill Fisher, Chairman
Richard Ballou, Vice Chairman
Blanche Tanner, Secretary
Gerry Vachon, Selectmen's Rep

Commission Members Absent:

Larry Fitzgerald

1). Call to Order:

Chairman Fisher called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

2). Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3). Public Comment: No Public Present

Mr. Fisher opened the meeting to public comment and said he would keep it open in case anyone wanted to come in and say anything.

4). Review of Minutes:

June 8, 2022- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Tanner, second Fisher) to accept the minutes as written passed 2-2 (Fisher, Tanner-aye; Ballou, Vachon-abstained).

5). Old Business:

Hay Day- Mr. Fisher said he submitted the paperwork to have the fur kit from NH Fish & Game placed on hold for Hay Day and he called today and verified that they had the paperwork. He said he will pick up the kit on Aug. 18 and return it on Aug. 23.

He said Hay Day will take place one week from this Saturday on Saturday, Aug. 20 and that he hopes everyone will come out for the event. He said we haven't had a Hay Day for a couple of years and it should be good time with vendors, food trucks and the Goodwin Library is having their book sale where you can buy a tote bag for \$12 and load it up with books.

He then asked if any of the members would be able to be there in the morning to help with the setup.

Ms. Tanner asked how many of the members present would be there and that she will be assisting the Rec. Dept. and she didn't know what her job was going to be with them. She said they previously said they wanted 2 tables and suggested they have one table where they may not have enough people and that she would be around but she didn't know at what time.

Mr. Fisher said they would have 1 table this year and he would be there all day. He asked if she

would be available in the morning so he could unload his truck, setup the fur kit and then move his truck and park it somewhere but he can't leave the fur kit "by its lonesome".

Ms. Tanner said she could be there at 8 a.m.

Mr. Fisher said that would be fine and Hay Day starts at 10 a.m. and they will probably want their vehicles off the grounds by 9 a.m. so he will be there at 8 a.m. He said he still has to go to PIP Rental and rent a table.

Mr. Vachon said he will be around in and out most of the day and he has an allotted time for the dunk tank.

Mr. Fisher said he will bring some application forms and see if they get people to join them because they really need the help.

Ms. Tanner said at a recent Selectmen's meeting the Interim Town Administrator was going over the open committee/board positions in town and she thought that he said the Con Com didn't need anybody. She suggested that Mr. Fisher check to make sure that Mr. Farrell's list is up to date.

Mr. Fisher said he would talk to him. He said there was a man that wanted to join, he submitted the paperwork, the Selectmen appointed him, he was called and told he needed to be sworn in and he has never shown up. It's been 4 months now and if something came up it would be nice to tell people he said.

He said they need volunteers to help with the 360 acre land donation coming up and after it is turned over there will be trails to put in and parking lots to design and it's going to be a lot of work. He said there are also things they want to do at the McCarthy Trail and they don't have the help to do that. I'll have some applications and hopefully people will want to join he said.

Mr. Ballou said he thought he could show up in the morning on Hay Day.

Mr. Fisher asked him to bring a chair as he only has 1 chair.

Any Other Old Business- Library Story Boards- Ms. Tanner said at the last meeting Mr. Fisher mentioned doing something with the library to put their story boards out. She said she was going to ask if he heard from anybody willing to help out with that project but obviously not. Mr. Fisher said the library has part of the new story boards and he has part of them in his garage. He said they just put a new story out on the McCarthy Trail using the old story board signs and they are also having trouble getting volunteers to help put those out.

He said the pieces of the signs are all cut out and sanded and it is a little complicated to put them together and its best to put them together once the posts are put in the ground and its going to take some work to do that.

SELT Membership- Mr. Fisher said the commission voted to pay \$100 to renew their membership in the Southeast Land Trust and he received a thank you letter from SELT. He said they protect over 25,000 acres of open spaces for the benefit of the people and nature and they do a lot of work.

6). New Business:

Cocheco River Local Advisory Committee- Mr. Fisher said CRLAC is an organization developed through RSA's for the state of NH and all the major rivers and waterfront properties fall within different regions and they each have their own advisory committees for those properties.

He said CRLAC includes the towns of New Durham, Farmington, Rochester, Dover and Newington and there is a position available to represent the Town of Farmington. He said the members review any building permits or plans to build anything along the Cocheco River to make sure that what is being done does not affect the flow or the cleanliness of the river. He said they protect the shoreline buffers and make sure that is not being encroached on and anything they want to do is not going to affect the Cocheco River.

He said the committee is advisory only but they do look at a lot of different plans. He said he used to be the representative and when he was on the committee they met on the first Monday of the month at 5 p.m. in the conference room at the Strafford Regional Planning Commission offices but he didn't know what their schedule is now or where they meet. He said anyone interested in the position should contact the Town Planner for more information.

French Conservation Trail Area Maintenance- Mr. Fisher said he was notified by the Cody family that they were walking the trails on the French property and there are a few places where the trails are overgrown and they wanted to know if the commission would like them to clean up those areas. He said it was great of them to offer but one of the commission members would have to be there with them and he can't walk the trails yet.

Mr. Ballou asked when the cleanup would be scheduled.

Mr. Fisher said he has not made any arrangements for it and he didn't know when they were available to do it and they wanted to know if we wanted them to do it. He said if Mr. Ballou was willing to head up the project he would give him their contact information after the meeting. He said there are a couple of spots where the brush has encroached on the trail area and needs to be cut back a little and the pieces that are cut back can be stacked in the woods as it makes good habitats for the coming winter.

Mr. Ballou asked for the location of trail.

Mr. Fisher said it is off of Hornetown Road.

Mr. Vachon said the entrance is before the horseshoe pits on the left.

Mr. Fisher said there is a sign there and it has a nice little parking area. He said he drove up there the other day and found the parking lot to be overgrown and he would try to take care of that this weekend. He said Mr. and Mrs. Cody were commission members previously and they may want to rejoin the commission when they retire and it would be nice to have them back.

Dubois and French Conservation Monitoring Walkthrough- Mr. Fisher said he was contacted by Steve Walker of the Conservation Land Stewardship Program and they do a yearly walk of our conservation lands to see how things are going and if anything needs to be done. He said Mr. Walker would be monitoring those properties on Friday, August 12 and he wanted to know

if there are any activities planned or if any changes have been made since the 2021 visit. He said he informed him that no changes were made. He asked if any of the members wanted to walk the properties with Mr. Walker and that it would take about 3-4 hours to walk all that. Mr. Ballou said especially with the bridge being closed.

Mr. Fisher said they don't necessarily have to be there and he will send us a letter letting us know what he found.

Mr. Ballou asked if they know when they are going to fix the River Road Bridge.

Mr. Vachon said there has been preliminary discussion on a possible solution and they (Selectmen) talked about a bond on Monday for the River Rd. and Hornetown Rd. bridges. He said they discussed replacing the temporary bridge on Hornetown Rd. with a box culvert and a new bridge on River Rd. because of the amount of flow through River Rd. There were preliminary discussions about bonding those two, just what the interest rates are looking like, no tax impact at this point and the dates to have things lined up before Town Meeting if that's the route we so choose to go he said.

Mr. Fisher said he thought the Spring St. Bridge was in worse condition than River Rd. Bridge but you can drive on the Spring St. Bridge and the River Rd. Bridge is closed.

Mr. Vachon said the River Rd. Bridge was down to a 6 ton weight limit so they closed it.

Mr. Fisher said when the Planning Board was reviewing a site plan on River Rd. a bunch of River Rd. residents were present and they said they were happy that it was closed.

Mr. Vachon said the River Rd. residents were happy because it's no longer a race track through there but the Hornetown Rd. residents were upset that it's closed because they now have to come down over Cardinal hill in the winter.

Any Other New Business- Intent to Cut- Mr. Fisher said he received a Notice of Intent to Cut today for: Map R07, Lots 04 & 05; access road-Meaderboro Road; lot size-77 acres; 45 acres to be cut; landowner-Jason Scruton; start date-Aug. 15.

Mr. Vachon searched the tax maps on his phone and said the property consists of 2 big lots at 63 and 24 acres each and is located at Shady Lane and a second unnamed road off of Meaderboro Road in the Camelot Shores area.

Land Donation Update- Mr. Fisher asked Mr. Vachon if the Selectmen have heard anything about the property off of Bay Road and School Street being donated to the Town. He asked if the lawyers have come back to the Town with anything that he knows of.

Mr. Vachon said nothing that he could recall being discussed at a meeting in the recent past.

Mr. Fisher said the last thing he heard was it was at the lawyers and they were discussing how to transfer the land down to them. He said the Selectmen have voted that once it is transferred the Town of Farmington will own it and control the land through the Con Com.

He said the land has been cut and cleared out quite a bit so that will make it a lot easier to put in trails and parking lots off of Bay Rd. and Spring St. and maybe he can get some volunteers to do it. But I can't do anything until the land is ours he said.

7). New Members Needed:

Mr. Fisher said like he said earlier tonight and at other meetings- "We need members!" He said all the boards need regular members and the Planning and Zoning Boards and the Con Com also need some alternates. He said the Con Com is allowed 7 members and they only have 5 right now and they have no alternates at this time. We need your help we have some acres to take care of and it's not that hard and it doesn't take up that much of your time. We like to do 2 town cleanups every year and that takes a little bit of time but most of the time it's coming to the meetings and voting on the things that are going on and helping people that want to put their land in conservation he said.

He said they meet the second Wednesday of every month at 6 p.m. in the Selectmen's Chambers or upstairs when this room is taken during budget season and their meetings usually run from a half-hour to an hour.

He added that the Economic Development Committee tries to get businesses to come to town and they need help.

8). Upcoming Dates:

Next Con Com Meeting- Wednesday, Sept. 14, 2022 at 6 p.m.

Mr. Fisher said the agenda would include a review of Hay Day and they will discuss what went well and what could have been done better.

Seeing no public present Chairman Fisher closed the public comment portion of the meeting and called for one more motion.

9). Adjournment:

Motion: (Ballou, second Vachon) to adjourn the meeting passed 4-0 at 6:28 p.m.

Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary

William "Bill" Fisher, Chairman