

Town of Farmington  
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, August 10, 2023  
Selectmen's Chambers  
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

**Commission Members Present:**

Bill Fisher, Chairman  
Gerry Vachon, Selectmen's Rep  
Jim Pollard, Secretary  
Amber Hall

**Commission Members Absent:**

Richard Ballou, Vice Chairman

**1). Call to Order:**

Chairman Fisher called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

**2). Pledge of Allegiance:**

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3). Public Comment:** None

Mr. Fisher said no members of the public were present but if anyone would like to come in he would keep the public comment open throughout the entire meeting.

**4). Review of Minutes:** None

There was no meeting in July.

**5). Old Business:**

**Hay Day-** Mr. Fisher said Hay Day will be held on Aug. 19 which is only a week and a half away. He said it will be at the ball fields back on the other side of the Post Office on Summer St. He said that is where it used to be back in the day when they first started and they are going to take it back there and see how things play out.

He said the gates will open at 7:30 a.m. until 9 a.m. for set up and he will be there at about 8 a.m. and he will need some help setting up the pop-up tent and the tables and chairs. He said he thinks they can pull into the ball field parking lot and there are 2 fields there and they are in the far field but he didn't know exactly where and he stop by the kiosk and find out where their set up spot is and he will need some help getting it all set up.

He said next Thursday he will pick up the fur kit from NH Fish & Game and he has a couple of tables in his basement that he will bring up and the pop-up and told the members if they are going hang around they will need to bring a chair.

Mr. Pollard said he would check his calendar and then e-mail Mr. Fisher regarding his availability that day.

Mr. Fisher said he would need to find a place to park his truck after they finish setting up as he

didn't think the parking lot at the ball fields would be open, the old fire station lot would not be open because of the antique cars and other displays, the library will be holding their book sale on the back side of the library because the streets will not be closed but he may be able to park on the street somewhere in the downtown area.

**Land Purchase-Tax Map R14, Lot 12 (34 acres) & Lot 13 (45 acres) & R03, Lot 2 (15 acres)**- Mr. Fisher said the Town purchased the land that has Well #6 on it along Rt. 11 and he understood the bidding at the auction started out slow then it got heated and real large and then it got back to a reasonable speed and eventually the Town won out and we got the property and it is ours forever and we don't have to worry about our lease running out and that's our main producing well for the town. What the Town is going to do with the property is still up in the air he said.

He said the Town did not need the money that the commission voted to loan them as they had enough money in various accounts to purchase the property but he wouldn't go into the purchase price. But the land is ours and that's a good thing for the town he said.

Mr. Vachon said while they were there bidding on it they found out from DES that there's a grant program they have applied for that will refund 50% of the purchase price because it had to do with our water system. Ken (Town Admin. Ken Dickie) applied for that last week he said.

**Any Other Old Business-** Mr. Fisher said they have talked numerous times about the storyboards that were given to the Con Com for their use wherever they deemed necessary along the McCarthy Trail. He said the plywood placards depict the 3 Little Pigs, Hansel & Gretel, Jack & the Beanstalk and several other characters and they have been in storage for years because they never could get a working party to put them up.

He said he had an epiphany at the Planning Board meeting when they were talking to the 500 Club about updating their plans for what they're doing at the 500 Club on Paulson Rd. which also concerns conservation land that they are partners with. He said they will be putting in a walking path all the way around the complex and they were talking about putting up signs about interesting facts about the land because it backs up on a marsh area.

He said since they haven't been able to post those and he can't go out and put them up and he didn't expect the members to either he talked to the Town Administrator and he agreed that they belong to the Con Com and they can do with them what they want. He proposed that they donate them to the 500 Club to be put up along their walking path.

He said he talked to 500 Club member Randy Talon and he agreed that it's a wonderful idea and it would be great for the kids and once they get it built it will be open 24/7 for anybody in town to use. He's got the manpower and the equipment to get those installed he said.

He asked how the members felt about this.

Mrs. Hall and Mr. Pollard said they thought it was a great idea.

Mr. Vachon said they are going to be out there anyway working on the trail so they can drop them in.

Mr. Fisher said they have all the materials they need to do it so it won't cost them anything and they're not just sitting in the old fire station which needs to get cleaned out because hopefully that's going to get sold soon.

**Motion:** (Fisher, second Pollard) that we donate the storyboards to the 500 Club for installation at the park on Paulson Road passed 4-0.

Mr. Fisher said he would get in touch with Mr. Talon and make arrangements to get them moved over to the 500 Club.

#### **6). New Business:**

**Southeast Land Trust-** Mr. Fisher said they received a letter from SELT thanking them for their donation of \$150 that keeps them as being a member in good standing with SELT and their projects. He said he wanted to let the members know that SELT did acknowledge their donation and sent them a nice little letter.

**Monitoring Visit Report-06/27/23-Mad River/French Property-** Mr. Fisher said the visit was conducted by Cheryl Harding Stewardship Specialist from the Conservation Land Stewardship Program in Concord, NH. He said there are 2 reports-one for the French conservation property on Hornetown Rd. and one for the Dubois property which is on River Rd.

He said in a nutshell everything went great there were no major discrepancies noted, no boundary lines being encroached on and everything was great. He said there are some pictures attached to each one and shows a map of the area and where they found things and a little break down of what was discovered.

He said the first one was the Mad River/French Property and then went into what the inspection incurred. He read she parked in the area and noticed there was some trash along the edges of the parking lot. The kiosk is in good condition but obscured by brush. One car was parked on the lot at the time and the vehicle owner said they were having car trouble and were waiting for assistance. They walked the trail loop that could use some brushing out in many areas and noted one tree stand without identification he said.

Mr. Fisher said that would probably be removed by the state and as far as clearing the brush they can probably get their forester to go out there and clear that out a little bit because they do stuff out there and he would talk more about him later in the meeting.

He said they walked a portion of the snow mobile trail and clothing and shoes had been dumped just off the trail near the river almost in the exact location as a Halloween display and the amount of pine needles accumulated on the clothing suggested they were dumped in the fall of 2022. He said he would talk to the snow mobile club and see if they will go out there and pick that up because it's in their portion of the land that goes along our boundary.

He read the bounds visible from roads and the snow mobile trail appear to be well marked. She checked the River Rd. frontage and pull in area and there were no obvious evidence of vehicles using the ford to cross the river. Some trash noted along the riverbank he said.

Mr. Fisher said all in all it was a very good report. He said if you look at the pictures, he didn't

know why people would throw all of that out there. They did that along River Rd. next to Rt. 11 just off the River Rd. several months back and I went out there and picked that all up and got rid of it he said.

**Monitoring Visit Report-06/27/23-Mad River/Dubois Property-** Mr. Fisher said this report is pretty much the exact same thing and they walked the frontage along River Rd. and a minor amount of trash was observed along the roadside including spent fireworks, packages, bottles and cans. He said since on one end of that road there is no bridge and on the other end it's bordered off with barriers he didn't know how people were doing that unless they walked out there and just shot off fireworks. He said he would try to get out there and take a look at that. He read they checked the parking and kiosk areas and some trash was left in the corner of the parking area and the kiosk was in good shape. He said they walked the orange blazed foot path along the river and found words had been written into the orange paint on multiple trees. He said the report says the Mad River water levels were high due to the abundance of rain and there were no signs of recent vehicle use noted on the property. He said in the past there were 4-wheelers going out there and running rampant and he hoped that has been taken care of. He said they drove Dubois Lane to the r-o-w gate that goes along the front of some people's property further down the road. All in all they were very good reports just a little trash he said.

**BH Keith Contract Renewal-** Mr. Fisher said that BH Keith has been our Town Forester since before he joined the Con Com and has always done an outstanding job and he didn't think anybody knows our properties better than BH Keith. He said he has controlled the logging at the Town Forest when it is required and if they look at the sheets in their packets they will see he gets a percentage of the logging when it is done and some of it also goes into the Con Com's coffers. He controls all of it and we don't have to do anything but vote on it and say yes it's time to do the logging he said.

He said their contract with BH Keith was just about up pre-COVID and then COVID hit and it has been 2 years since they have even looked at those contracts and they have all lapsed. He said he talked via e-mail with BH Keith and Assocs. and they provided Attachment A with the 2023-2025 Forest Management Service Agreement for all of our major properties and has given us a price for doing the work that he does and they haven't changed.

He said some of the things the he does is on the French conservation area and he usually cleans up the trees when they go down and straightens the bridges that are out there and his company put those bridges in across some of the wetlands areas. He said there is also a woodcock habitat area out there and he makes sure that the growth, the trees and grasses and marshy areas are there to support the woodcocks. He takes care of all of that for us and fertilizes when it needs to be done on all of our properties he said.

Mr. Fisher said he would like to extend their contracts with him thru 2025 and that by extending the contracts they don't have to go through the bidding process but if the board is not comfortable with the prices he charges they could go with the bidding process. He then

asked the members what they wanted to do.

Mr. Vachon said it says an hourly rate and asked if he knew roughly what it costs a year.

Mr. Fisher said it hasn't really cost us that much maybe about \$1,000-\$1,500 a year. He said some years it doesn't cost us anything because nothing needs to be done.

He said he does do the yearly walk with the state and he has a bill here for the last one which we will get to in the amount of \$150. He said as a biologist he charges \$75 an hour and he only charged them for 2 hours but he knows that it took longer than 2 hours plus his gas, etc. so he has given us quite a deal and he's working for us without a contract right now.

He said he is also doing the initial investigations on the Cartwright property and has been working on the Phase I studies. He said they paid him a good amount for that somewhere in the neighborhood of \$3,000 but he felt that was a darn good price for looking at over 300 acres of land. He asked how the board feels and if they should extend his contract or put it out to bid. I do not know what other people would charge but I'm comfortable with what he has charged us and it has always been a fair price. He doesn't gouge us and he usually rounds down to the nearest hour he said.

Mrs. Hall said she was in favor of extending the contract. She said it would be a different conversation if they weren't having a good experience but it sounds like we've had a great experience.

Mr. Fisher said as a Town they've had a wonderful experience with him and if we weren't he would be the first one to say so and want to put it out to bid.

Mr. Pollard said he agreed with Mrs. Hall.

Mr. Vachon said he was just curious about how much we are paying him a year.

Mr. Fisher again said we haven't paid him all that much and that comes out of the funds from when property comes out of Current Use it's not taxpayers' dollars.

**Motion:** (Fisher, second Hall) to extend the contracts with BH Keith & Assocs. for the stewardship of our land management through 2025 passed 4-0.

Mr. Fisher said he would contact Mr. Keith and discuss this with him and with the Town Administrator. He said he would let them know if he or the Town Admin signed the contract.

**BH Keith Invoice-** Mr. Fisher said he received a bill from BH Keith for the annual easement monitoring compliance file review and follow-up with the monitoring steward for the French and Dubois lots in the amount of \$150.

**Motion:** (Fisher, second Hall) to pay BH Keith \$150 passed 4-0.

Mr. Fisher said he will get the bill turned into the office and get it paid.

**NH DES File #2023-01326-** Mr. Fisher said they have 4 reports from the NH Dept. of Environmental Services and there is nothing to vote on here it's just notification of what they've done and what they've approved. He said the first one is an incomplete Forestry Statutory Permit by Notification (RSA 482-A), subject property was Farmington Tax Map R47, Lot 4-1. He said all this was that the petitioner accidentally mislabeled their property as Lot 4-1



and DES figured out that it was Lot 41-1 and they resubmitted their application. He said in their packets he attached a copy of the tax map and it's the lower piece of property adjoining or abutting the trailer park off of Main St. on the north side of Dick Dame Lane. He said they are just going out and cleaning up the property, clearing some brush and they are not building anything but since there are wetlands out there they had to go through DES

**NH DES File #2023-01381-** Mr. Fisher said this is for Tax Map R45, Lot 05, Sublots 04 & 05 which is on the lower left hand corner of the attached tax map. He said there are 2 pieces of property there and they are just cleaning up their property out there and that has been approved.

Mr. Vachon asked if this is up off of Ten Rod Rd.

Mr. Fisher said that's correct and it has been approved by NH DES.

**NH DES Land Resources Management File #2023-01523- Reported Alleged Violation 30**

**Bunker Street, Tax Map U10, Lot 103-** Mr. Fisher said he was not going to get into too much of the particulars on this. He said this is a housing subdivision on Bunker St. which is just past the Town Hall where the Rec. Dept is now. He said that area also runs down in behind the old fire station and those properties in there have been noted as very low lying properties and every year they get marshy.

He said these people had a drainage swale in their backyard and they were clearing it up and it diverted some of the water into a neighbor's backyard and the neighbor filed a complaint with the state. He said the state came out and is working with the owners of 30 Bunker St. to try to figure out how to take care of the matter. Nobody is in trouble, nobody is getting sued it was just a notification and it was unintentional. I talked to the Code Enforcement Officer he's been out there and looked at it but we had to be notified since it is a semi-marshlands wetlands area and the drainage swale was diverting some of the water he said.

He said he was not sure if the problem has been taken care of but he knew the state and the CEO is working with the property owners to get this taken care of to the abutter's satisfaction.

**Notice of Intent to Cut-Tax Map R058, Lot 10, Old Aiken Road-** Mr. Fisher said this is also up off of Ten Rod Rd. and read the acreage of the lot is 100 acres and the acreage of cut is 78 acres. He read aloud the MBF (thousand board feet) of each species to be cut, the tons of chips and the number of cords of cordwood estimated from the cut. He noted that the notice is dated 06/28/23 but they want to do this from April 2023 to March 2024 and that he attached the tax map to the copy of the notice they received in their packets.

**Any Other New Business-** None

**7). Member Comments:** None

Chairman Fisher then closed the public comment portion of the meeting. He said if anyone has any questions they should feel free to contact him

**8).Upcoming Dates:**

Next Meeting: Thursday, Sept. 14, 2023

**10). Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (Vachon, second Hall) to adjourn the meeting passed 4-0 at 6:37 p.m.

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Fisher', is written over a horizontal line.

William "Bill" Fisher, Chairman