

Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 8, 2023
Selectmen's Chambers
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

Commission Members Present: Chairman Bill Fisher, Vice Chairman Richard Ballou, Selectmen's Rep Gerry Vachon, Secretary Jim Pollard and Amber Hall

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: None

Mr. Fisher said there were no members of the public present but he would keep the public comment open for the entire meeting and maybe somebody might want to comment to comment on something and they were welcome to come in any time.

4). Review of Minutes:

May 24, 2023-Public Meeting Minutes- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Vachon, second Pollard) to accept the minutes as written passed 4-0-1 (Ballou abstained).

5). Old Business:

Reimbursement for Purchase of Gloves for Town Cleanup- Mr. Fisher said that were purchased for the cleanup came to a total of \$34.69 and asked if he could reimbursed from their operating budget.

Motion: (Ballou, second Hall) to reimburse Bill Fisher for \$34.69 for the cost of the gloves passed 4-0-1 (Fisher abstained).

Alteration of Terrain Bureau Permit Application for 115 NH Rt. 11, Tax Map R3, Lot 4- Mr.

Fisher said they discussed the AOT permit for this property at their special meeting 2 weeks ago and their comments have been forwarded to the state and they are waiting to see what the state says about giving him his permissions. He said they may or may not hear and it will come before the Planning Board next so they will see what the Planning Board has to say.

Con Com Handbook- He said they finally received their handbooks and he put one out for everybody. He said the bill was for \$120 and they voted to spend \$140 but he forgot that he already had a free copy so he only ordered 6 so he brought the bill in and it's been paid.

Any Other Old Business- Hay Day-Mr. Fisher said Hay Day is coming in a couple of months and someone found the commission's banner and brought it back so they don't have to buy a new

one. He said he would make arrangements to get the fur kit and they have a couple of months to think about this so if there is anything else the members would like to do or display at their booth at Hay Day to let him know.

Mr. Vachon asked if he had any maps showing the trails.

Mr. Fisher said they only have a map of the trail on the French property and he could probably get some copies made of that.

Mr. Vachon said he was asking if they have a big map they could display so people could see the trails.

Mr. Fisher said they don't have a big map and they only have the small map of the French trail.

Old Fire Station RFP- Mr. Fisher said the Request for Proposals has gone out so sooner or later they have to move their placards out of there and get them put up on the McCarthy Trail and he still doesn't know how they are going to get that done. Something to think about he said.

6). New Business:

Potential Land Purchase- In compliance with RSA 41:14-a the Farmington Board of Selectmen will hold public hearings on June 19, 2023 and June 29, 2023 to solicit comments regarding the proposed acceptance of a purchase of land identified as Tax Map R14, Lot 12 (34 acres) & Lot 13 (45 acres) and Tax Map R03, Lot 2 (15 acres) which where the Town Well #6 and pump house resides. It is requested by the Board of Selectmen, the Farmington Conservation Commission review this proposed purchase and provide any comments prior to the public hearing on June 19, 2023.

Mr. Fisher read the above notice aloud and said it is also required by the RSA's that the Planning Board, the Con Com and if we had a Historic District Commission they would also have to provide comments. He said the Planning Board reviewed this last night at their meeting and provided comments and they were in full support of the Town buying this property.

He said it is going up for public auction but he didn't know the day. He said this would protect Town Well #6 and we have lost 2 wells due to contamination and we have one that is so old it puts out brown water instead of clear water and we have a couple more and right now Well #6 is our main well. He said we still have 25 or 30 years left on the lease which could mean in 25 or 30 years if somebody else bought this property the lease goes with it until that time and when that's up they could close the lease and not lease the well to us anymore so this protects Farmington if we can get the property.

Mr. Fisher asked Mr. Vachon if he had anything he would like to say on this matter on behalf of the Selectmen.

Mr. Vachon said he didn't have any public comments on the matter and if they would like they could go into non-public session to discuss any specific questions.

Mr. Fisher said he understood that there are funds set aside for purchases like this but he did not know how much and if anyone has questions about that to please see the Selectmen. He said there are some pictures here that show the land and to give you reference on where this

land is if you look on the top left hand corner of the first page that is Cardinal's Sampler Gift Shop and the land to the south of that is the property they are talking about. He said there are 3 parcels, 2 of them on one side of the Cocheco River and the other one is on the other side of the river. He said the pump house is on one side and the well is on the other side and there is a snowmobile trail that goes around this property that starts at PIP Rental, runs along the south side of PIP Rental and then heads north and circles this whole property.

Mr. Fisher said part of this purchase would include part of the Cocheco River which might be used for other functions further down the line. He said it used to be a gravel pit out there and to what extent it could still be used as a gravel pit for the Town if they purchase it he does not know but there is a possibility the Town could have a good source of sand and gravel.

He said if you look at the third picture it shows R14, Lot 13 you can see the snowmobile trail around the property so it used out there quite frequently. He said there is 400 ft. radius which is a no-build zone around the well which protects the well from contamination and if the Town got this property we could protect it further.

Mrs. Hall asked if this is the M. Bradsher lot.

Mr. Fisher said yes and he passed away and now it's going up for public auction.

Mrs. Hall asked if what is before them is the Town is considering purchasing all of it.

Mr. Fisher said the Town is considering purchasing these 3 lots of land which comes to almost 94 acres which would be Tax Map R14, Lots 12 & 13 and Tax Map R03, Lot 02. He said that last piece of property is landlocked and if we bought lots 12 and 13 we would have to give an easement to somebody to get out through that piece of property and the Town decided to try buying that also.

He said some of the Planning Board's concerns were in the future we know there is going to be development along the Rt. 11 corridor and this is prime land and to what extent it could be developed and whether we would want to go with another industrial park out there as long as they stayed out of the 400 ft. radius around the well and the Town could benefit from the sale of the land. He said the Planning Board is looking at trying to make that area of land look better for investment and so this may work into that later in the future.

He then asked the members if they had any questions or comments.

Consensus of the members was they support the Town purchasing the land.

Mr. Fisher said it could be a good thing for the Town and if nothing else it will preserve this area along the Cocheco and possibly by owning this land there are trails that go to this land possibly develop some roadways and maybe the Town would want to put part of it into a conservation easement and we could turn it into a park area and possibly kayak launches along the Cocheco. There might be other types of opportunities out there like picnic areas, swimming areas or whatever for the town or possibly an industrial park who knows he said.

He said it looks like the consensus is they all agree on it as the Planning Board did and they voted to send a letter to the Board of Selectmen supporting the idea to buy the property and

he would write it up and sign it.

Motion: (Ballou, second Pollard) to send a letter of support to the Board of Selectmen and for Chairman Fisher to sign it passed 4-0-1 (Vachon abstained).

Mr. Fisher said if the Town is able to get this property and they use that gravel pit area it might free up the gravel pit they are currently using behind the Sarah Greenfield Business Park which means maybe they could expand that industrial park.

Any Other New Business- Mr. Fisher said the Town has received some grants and one of them is for the EPA Brownfields targeted assessment for the old fire station area for a phase II study. He said they found some chemicals that have to be looked at further and this grant was for \$58,500 and that's going to further push along getting the old fire station sold.

Mr. Vachon said he didn't know that they found chemicals but there was a gas station there so it's a possibility.

Mr. Fisher said at the Planning Board they said they found some chemicals that they wanted to delve into further and this will get us there.

Mr. Vachon said a Level 1 study was done which assesses the possibilities and this gets us actual testing and verifying.

Mr. Fisher said we also got a grant for \$135,740 to do a study for housing and improving the Rt. 11 corridor and reviewing the Tax Increment Financing District. He said the TIF District is out of date with what it requires and this will bring it up to date and will go into putting more housing along Rt. 11 and into the TIF District which comes up Main Street. This will also look at putting water and sewer lines out into the area and getting some more cost estimates for that he said.

Mrs. Hall asked who this grant was from.

Mr. Fisher said it's called the Housing Opportunity Plan Grant Application and it's with the state. He said this is part of the grant we got to hire a person to look at housing requirements for the town and she will be working for us through next summer. He said she is doing a fabulous job and she put in for this grant and got it and she worked on it with Kyle Pimental who is our Planner that we rent from the Strafford Regional Planning Commission. There is almost \$200,000 in grants and they're going out for more grants to deal with housing he said. He said they put in for a grant several years ago to improve Main St.-the sidewalks, the traffic controls, sidewalk crossings and stuff and we were very, very close to getting it and the state changed something and all the money went south. He said it left Strafford County completely out of it and we were in the top running for it so they are putting in some more for that. Chairman Fisher then closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

7).Upcoming Dates:

Next Meeting- July 13, 2023

8). Non-Public Session A:

Motion: (Vachon, second Pollard) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (d)

Acquisition, Sale or Lease of Property passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Fisher, Ballou, Vachon, Hall, Pollard-aye) at 6:23 p.m.

Motion: (Vachon, second Hall) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 6:34 p.m.

9). Adjournment:

Motion: (Vachon, second Pollard) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 6:34 p.m.

Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary



William "Bill" Fisher, Chairman