

Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 14, 2018

Commission Members Present:

Dave Connolly, Chairman
Randy Orvis, Vice Chairman
Laura Bogardus, Secretary
Bill Fisher
Tom Sorensen
Richard Ballou

Commission Members Absent:

Charlie King, Selectmen's Rep.
Patience Taylor

1). Call to Order:

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

2). Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3). Moment of Silence:

Chairman Connolly asked for a moment of silence in memory of former Sen. Sam Cataldo.

4). Public Comment: None

5). Photo Op:

Chairman Connolly asked the members to gather for a photo for the Annual Town Report.

6). Review of Minutes:

January 11, 2018- Page 3, Item #6C, line 10- strike "would" and add "to" after "her". Page 3, line 14- strike "from the library" and add "purchased from the Historical Society" after "history book". Page 3, Item #7A, Question #3- change "out" to "our".

Motion: (Orvis, second Fisher) to approve the minutes as amended passed 5-0-1 (Ballou abstained).

7). Old Business:

A). Leary Snowshoe Walk- Mr. Connolly said the walk co-sponsored by the Moose Mountains Regional Greenways(MMRG)/Con Com has been re-scheduled to March 4, 2018 from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. with a rain date of March 11, 2018. Due to the limited amount of parking available, Cameron's will allow participants to car pool from their parking lot and overflow parking will be available on the French property. To RSVP or for more information go to mmrg.org he said.

B). Bug Forum Review- Mr. Connolly said the forum went well and that 10 people attended the discussion held about 2 weeks ago.

Mr. Orvis suggested the forums should be advertised on other town's Community Forum Face book pages in the local area.

Mr. Connolly thanked the guest speaker, the Police and Fire Depts. for the use of the Community Room at the Public Safety Building, Honey Dew Donuts and Mr. Fisher for providing refreshments for the event. He suggested they hold the forum again in the spring or fall.

C). Forum Suggestions- Ms. Bogardus said she received a request for a Moose talk with a specific speaker and said she will attempt to find out if the speaker is available.

Mr. Orvis suggested a forum be held regarding ticks and Lyme disease.

Mr. Connolly recalled one of the first forums hosted by the Con Com was about conservation easements provided by the MMRG and there was a good turnout for the event.

Ms. Bogardus suggested the program include an introduction to Conservation Commissions.

Mr. Connolly said the NH Assoc. of Con Com's may be willing to provide a speaker on that topic.

Ms. Bogardus said that the UNH Cooperative Extension offers several topics/speakers available for community forums. She suggested they post a request for forum topics on the Farmington Community Forum Face book page to see what people are interested in learning about.

Mr. Connolly agreed and suggested they reach out on social media for topic ideas and review the response at their March meeting.

Mr. Fisher said that a talk about soil preparation and planning a backyard garden would be helpful with spring on its way soon.

Mr. Connolly said that would be a good topic for an April forum.

Ms. Bogardus said the UNH Co-op Extension would have a speaker familiar with that subject.

Mr. Connolly said that the Strafford County Conservation District may be able to recommend a speaker to speak about local farming.

D). Any Other Old Business- None

8). New Business:

A). MMRG Annual Meeting- Mr. Connolly said the members were invited to the Moose Mountains Regional Greenways Annual Meeting and Auction on Monday, March 26, 2018 from 5:30-8:30 p.m. in Wolfeboro. He said Commission members have attended the meeting almost every year and asked if anyone was interested in attending the meeting this year.

Motion: (Connolly, second Orvis) to expend up to \$140 for 4 members to attend the MMRG Annual Meeting passed 6-0.

Ms. Bogardus and Mr. Sorensen expressed interest in attending the meeting.

B). Seacoast Harvest Sponsorship- Mr. Connolly said he received an e-mail from Jillian Hall outlining changes for the 2018 Seacoast Harvest Guide, their new website, distribution sites for the flyers/handouts and increasing number of printed materials available. He said that last year the Commission spent \$100 to sponsor the group and asked the members for their thoughts on renewing the sponsorship.

Mr. Ballou said the organization benefits the poorer people in town.

Mr. Connolly said he felt they should not pay the sponsorship fee again and asked if the members could convince him otherwise.

Ms. Bogardus asked if it was successful when the SAM van came to town.

Mr. Ballou said there were some issues about parking and letting the public know where they would be during Hay Day but that they had revised their plans for this year.

Mr. Connolly asked if the van came to library and if there were any parking issues there.

Mr. Fisher said the library made arrangements with TD Bank to let the SAM van use their parking lot. He said the library would support their return this year and help get information out to people who may be interested in purchasing locally grown produce and other items. He added that the library has agreed to allow the Con Com to have bulletin board space to post informational items there. He recommended supporting the SAM Van and noted there were several patrons during the van's visits to town.

Ms. Bogardus said that this is what she wanted to see- the van bringing local food to local people. She suggested they sponsor the group for one more year.

Cable TV Coordinator Robert Hall suggested the van's next visit be advertised on the local cable TV calendar of events.

Ms. Bogardus said it should also be advertised on the Community Forum and Con Com Facebook pages.

Mr. Sorensen asked if Ms. Hall could provide the commission with sales results and demographics about the population served by the farmers' market program. He said that a town with the name "Farmington" should have one of the greatest farmers' markets with the most participating vendors around.

Mr. Connolly said he talked to Ms. Hall on Hay Day and was told that she was very pleased with the success achieved there

Ms. Bogardus said she would like to support the group's efforts to support local farming.

Mr. Connolly asked the commission if they wished to act on the sponsorship or wait until the requested information is provided to them.

Motion: (Fisher, second Ballou) to donate \$100 to Seacoast Harvest passed 6-0.

Mr. Connolly said he will contact Ms. Hall and request the information for the next meeting.

C). SELT Monitoring Reports- Mr. Connolly said the Southeast Land Trust performed the 2017 yearly monitoring of the Huppe, Smith, Whittam and Maynard conservation properties and provided the following reports:

Huppe Property- This is a 76.5 acre property on Meaderboro Road which was put into conservation in November 2014. The landowners and SELT staff members visited the site in December 2017 and walked some portions of the boundaries, trails and the interior of the site and viewed an aerial photo prior to the site.

The monitor found that the stream crossing has been removed, the boundaries are well defined, no buffer signs are posted around the streams and wetlands and the SELT conservation

signs have not been installed.

The land is used for agricultural and forestry uses, a small Christmas tree farm, fruit trees, hay field and was last logged in 2013 and should not need to be logged again for 10-15 years. No natural alterations of the land were observed.

Activities observed on site include wood use by the landowners. The landowner may cut a few trees in the excluded area to enhance the view. No abutter or third party activities were observed. There were no enforcement issues or recommendations stated by the monitor.

Maynard Property- This is a 10 acre parcel located on Sheepboro Road. The monitor reported that she did not meet with the landowners, did not walk any trails, woods or interiors and only walked some of the boundaries. The portion of the boundary viewed was well defined and in good condition. The parcel is in a mixed state of orchard, trees, field, forest and Christmas trees. The field is mowed and the orchards and gardens are maintained.

There were no new natural alterations of the property.

There was no evidence of abutters or third party activities and any future plans for the site are unknown. There were no enforcement issues or recommendations were made by the monitor.

Smith Property- The monitor met with the landowner at the seven acre parcel on River Road last July. They walked the roads, interior, road frontage and boundaries and found the boundaries to be mostly well marked and conservation signs posted at the road frontage and the gate. The land remains as open space with no active management and the woods roads are in good condition. There is a small sign by the gate that states ATV's are not allowed and the SELT conservation signs are posted.

Manmade alterations include trash along the road and in the parking area and a small fire pit by the river with trash around it. There were no natural alterations of the property observed.

The Smiths have a non-transferable right to camp on the property but said they no longer do so. There are no future plans for the property and no third party or abutter activity was seen.

The Smiths expressed frustration with people continually having fires and littering on their property. They planned to attend the Con Com meeting on July 12 to discuss if anything can be done about these issues but were called back to Long Island due to an emergency.

Mr. Connolly said this is an on-going problem on River Road and that it is a shame that people has such disrespect for other people's properties especially those properties that the landowners give to the residents to enjoy.

Whittam Property- This 98 acre parcel is located on Shady Lane which is off of Meaderboro Road. The site walk was conducted in January and the monitor found the boundaries well defined and the SELT signs were in place.

The property is used for forestry, agricultural and recreational uses with the field being used for hay and a pasture. There were several trees marked with blue paint and the landowners plan to have a timber harvest when conditions are favorable for a harvest. The trails are maintained and used by the owners and their neighbors.

There were no new natural alterations or third party/abutter activities observed. The monitor stated there were no recommendations or enforcement needed for the site.

Mr. Fisher agreed about the disrespect people show to others' properties and noted the amount of trash he has seen at Abbott's Grant and the French properties.

Mr. Orvis said he has noticed the most trash on the pull-off area on River Road.

Mr. Sorensen said people also throw trash over the rocks that border the front of the parking area. He suggested that maybe a forum should be held to teach people why it is important not to litter.

Mr. Fisher said there is evidence of possible under age beer parties at the Pound Road site.

Chairman Connolly said past surveillance of the properties has worked so the Commission may want to consider adding new surveillance equipment. He said he would provide the members with a cost estimate for the additional equipment at a future meeting.

D). Rep. for Stewardship- Mr. Connolly said a new committee is being formed to participate in the potential redevelopment of the old Fire Station property. He said he was asked if the Commission would be interested in having a representative on the committee. He then nominated Mr. Fisher for the position.

Ms. Bogardus seconded the nomination.

Mr. Fisher accepted the nomination.

E). Any Other New Business: Ms. Bogardus reported that she and Mr. Sorensen went to the French property and found that a bridge near the snow mobile trail was completely washed out and a second bridge has shifted off one of the corner blocks.

Mr. Sorensen suggested the bridge that has shifted could be shifted back onto the corner block by a few men lifting it back into place. He said the bridge that completely washed off its anchors is up on one side of the river bank and needs a different type of anchoring system to hold it.

Mr. Orvis said when there is a rain storm during winter the ground is frozen and the water can't soak in so it all runs off. The steep slopes up on New Durham ridge sends the water along two miles of watershed which fills up the channels along the way he said.

Mr. Sorensen asked if there are any guidelines for structures along the trails and if they could put posts in the ground to lift the bridge 2 steps higher to allow for more water volume to pass.

Mr. Orvis suggested they could also try using a cable system where the bridge would slide up and back down on its own depending on the amount of water passing under it.

Consensus of the members was to consult with bridge builder Steve Yurick and property manager Barry Keith about the issue.

Mr. Connolly said he would invite them to meet with members at the March meeting.

Members then discussed potential other accesses to the property for future consideration.

9). FYI:

A). SRPC Retirement- Mr. Connolly informed the members that Strafford Regional Planning Executive Director Cynthia Copeland is retiring in March and wished her well in her new career

called "Retirement".

B). Any Other FYI- None

10). March Dates:

A). Town Elections- Tuesday, March 13, 2018

B). Town Meeting- Wednesday, March 14, 2018

C). Next Con Com Meeting- Chairman Connolly said the commission will not be meeting on the second Wednesday in March as it is Town Meeting day so the meeting has been moved to Wednesday, March 21 at 6 p.m.

11). Any Other Business:

Commission Reappointments- Mr. Connolly asked Mr. Sorensen, Mr. Ballou and Ms. Bogardus if they have applied for re-appointment to the Commission.

Ms. Bogardus said she has submitted her paperwork but Mr. Sorensen and Mr. Ballou said they have not yet submitted their applications to the Selectmen's Secretary.

Mr. Connolly said he would like to have them as returning members and urged them to reapply at their earliest convenience as their terms will expire soon.

12). Adjournment:

Motion: (Orvis, second Bogardus) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 7 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Dave Connolly, Chairman