

Town of Farmington  
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, March 21, 2018

**Commission Members Present:**

Dave Connolly, Selectmen's Rep.  
Laura Bogardus  
Tom Sorensen  
Patience Taylor  
Bill Fisher

**Commission Members Absent:**

Randy Orvis, Vice Chairman, excused  
Richard Ballou

**Others Present:**

Barry Keith, BH Keith Associates  
Steve Yurick, JS Land Design Services

**1). Call to Order:**

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

**2). Pledge of Allegiance:**

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3). Public Comment:**

Mr. Connolly explained that due to being recently elected to the Board of Selectmen that he is no longer Chairman of the Conservation Commission. He said the meeting would then be turned over to the Vice Chairman who is out on an excused absence due to a meeting with a client. The next board officer in line is the Secretary, Laura Bogardus and she will preside over the rest of the meeting. Mr. Connolly then turned the meeting over to Ms. Bogardus.

Ms. Bogardus then made the following motion:

**Motion:** (Bogardus, second Sorensen) to move Agenda Item #10B (Commission elections) up on the agenda to be the next item to be addressed passed 5-0.

**Chairman-** Ms. Bogardus called for nominations for Chairman.

**Motion:** (Connolly, second Taylor) to nominate Laura Bogardus for Chairman;  
There were no other nominations.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Bogardus accepted the nomination.

**Vice Chairman-** Chairman Bogardus called for nominations for Vice Chairman.

**Motion:** (Connolly, second Taylor) to nominate Randy Orvis for Vice Chairman;  
There were no other nominations.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Connolly said he previously spoke with Mr. Orvis who said he would accept the nomination if offered.

**Secretary-** Chairman Bogardus called for nominations for Commission Secretary.

**Motion:** (Fisher, second Sorensen) to nominate Patience Taylor as the Commission Secretary;  
There were no other nominations.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Taylor accepted the nomination.

#### **4). Review of Minutes:**

February 14, 2018- No errors or omissions

**Motion:** (Fisher, second Taylor) to accept the minutes as written passed 5-0.

#### **5). French Property Bridges:**

Mr. Connolly said he asked Property Manager Barry Keith and Property Constructionist Steve Yurick to attend the meeting to discuss two bridges on the property that decided to “take a walk”. He said it was reported to him in the late fall that the bridge closest to the snow mobile bridge came loose and was only held there by one cable. A second bridge near Whaleback Rock also became dislodged from one of its anchors and has shifted. Since that time a frequent visitor to property has secured the bridge near the snow mobile trail but it still should be inspected. He then asked Mr. Keith and Mr. Yurick about the best way to secure the bridges. Mr. Keith said he thought it be appropriate to walk the trail loop when the snow has melted and check the bridges and for winter damage in the trail area. He suggested that some of work such as the cleanup of fallen branches and any other debris from the trail could be incorporated into the Spring Cleanup day.

Mr. Sorensen said that the whaleback bridge had a patio brick under one corner which was undermined due to erosion causing the bridge to shift and became unlevel.

Mr. Keith said the lower bridge is located in a flat wetlands area and the area is lower in the watershed so it receives more water. The storm that is thought to have caused the damage was a real “flashy” storm so the water must have pushed the whole bottom of the bridge up dislodging it he said.

Mr. Yurick said the longest cable connecting the bridge to the embankment was 16 feet long and the only other method to secure it would have been to place a large stone under one end of it to elevate it but even that wouldn’t guarantee the water wouldn’t dislodge it. He said they need to be careful not to create a dam effect where the water would crash up against the bridge and eventually dislodge it and then send it down stream.

Mr. Keith suggested they could put additional cement blocks under the bridges to elevate them to allow more water to pass through. There may be a need for steps on either side of the bridge to allow for easier access to the bridge deck. He said they could also put in rebar and eye hooks to further secure the bridges.

Mr. Yurick said he thought that these 2 bridges would be the only areas of concern on the property due to the large amount of water that flows through that portion of the property.

Mr. Keith added that that storm was a pretty abnormal weather event.

Mr. Connolly asked Mr. Keith to notify the Chairman when he plans to walk the trail so any available members can accompany him on the walk.

Mr. Keith said he was planning to walk the site when he is already going to be in that neighborhood, possibly in April.

Mr. Sorensen said he has pier construction experience that may be of help in solving the

problem offered to accompany Mr. Keith on his inspection of the property.

Mr. Keith added that his 2018 work plan for the property includes trail inspections in the spring, accompanying the easement monitors during their site walks, be available to meet with the Commission as needed and to conduct the bush hogging to maintain the wildlife opening. Discussion also included trail maintenance, mowing and other future tasks that may need to be performed on the property.

Mr. Keith said the Management Plan for the French property was developed in 2007 and that the easement requires that the plan be updated every 10 years. He said the current plan can be used as a template for the update so there is no need to start from scratch to update the plan. The legal easement document is included in the plan and states that the Management Plan will be updated as necessary but at least every 10 years. He said he plans to re-read the current plan, conduct the site walk and then draft a revised plan later this spring.

Mr. Fisher asked about the cost for the update.

Mr. Keith said he did not have an exact figure but estimated it would be approx. \$2,000. He said the property is not that large and that he is trying to find out what the state will accept and still keep costs lower for the Town.

Mr. Connolly said they would need to check the Town bid policy to determine if this service needs to be put out to bid first.

**Dubois Property-** Mr. Keith said the work plan for the Dubois lot is to walk the site and conduct the spring inspection, liming and fertilization of the log landing and to accompany the state easement monitor on their inspection in the fall.

**Town Forest-** Mr. Connolly asked about the status of the Town Forest Management Plan. Mr. Keith said he was planning on following up on the driveway permit process with the Public Works Dept. in April, develop the layout for the project, attend a Commission meeting to discuss the plans in May and then coordinate the work. He said he has another project in the area in June and would use the same contractor for the Town Forest project.

Mr. Connolly suggested Chairman Bogardus plan to discuss the project at the April Commission meeting and to hold a public hearing in May.

#### **6). Blue Job Hikers:**

Mr. Connolly said there has long been an issue with hikers getting lost from the Blue Job Mountain hiking trails. He said most of them start out in Strafford, hike up to the water tower and end up on Meaderboro Road and then need to be driven 7 miles back to their vehicles. He said that about 5 years ago the Commission took up the issue with NH Dept. of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) and the state planned to have trail signs made and the Commission would assist in the installation of the signs. The Farmington High School wood shop was to have constructed the signs but the wood shop was closed. DRED then decided to have Spaulding High make the signs but after several years the signs still have not been made. The previous DRED administrator resigned and the new administrator has once again enlisted

Spaulding High School to make the signs which are expected to be completed this spring. The administrator will contact the Commission when the signs are ready to be installed to see if any of the members are available to assist with the installation.

Mr. Connolly said that so far there haven't been any severe injuries or the need for search and rescue missions that he is aware of but was concerned that it will happen eventually which will also be very costly to the Town and the County. He said if he does not hear back from the administrator by May he will contact her for a status update.

Mr. Fisher said it is also an expense to the residents in the Scruton Road/Meaderboro Road areas to transport the lost hikers back to their cars in Strafford and then return to their homes in Farmington. He said it is the state's responsibility to mark the trails better since they own the land there.

#### **7). Steering Committee:**

Mr. Fisher said the PLAN NH Steering Committee had their first meeting a few weeks ago and the second meeting is scheduled for March 28, 2018 at 6 p.m. in the Municipal Office Building. He said they are developing plans to interview residents about what they want to do to redevelop Farmington which will lead into the redevelopment of the former Fire Station property. There will be zoning and Planning Board changes proposed based on the results of the study. The first steps will be to determine the types of questions to ask and who to interview he said.

Mr. Connolly said the study will primarily concern the Village Center District and asked if all of the interviewees will be from the VC District.

Mr. Fisher said they plan to talk with residents from all over town. He said each committee member has been tasked to come up with 5 to 10 names of people they would like to interview and input will also be taken from any residents who attend the committee meetings. Once the data is collected the representative from UNH will put it all together in a software program which will create a report on the results of the interviews. The Town received a \$20,000 grant from PLAN NH and a consultant has donated \$4,500 worth of his time to the project and we are going to work towards what the people of Farmington want he said.

Mr. Connolly asked if the Steering Committee is working in conjunction with the Planning Board or the Planning Dept.

Mr. Fisher said the committee includes members from the Planning Dept., the Planning Board, Con Com, Zoning Board, Economic Development Committee and resident at-large members. He added that the information obtained from the study will also be incorporated into the revised Master Plan. He suggested anyone wishing more information should contact the Town Planner Dan DeSantis at the Planning Dept. or to e-mail Mr. Fisher at his e-mail address listed on the Town or Goodwin Library websites.

## **8). Salmon Falls Community Workshop:**

Chairman Bogardus said Trout Unlimited would like to sponsor a workshop on River Resiliency/Flood Resiliency in conjunction with Moose Mountains Regional Greenways. She then asked if any of the members would be interested in attending this workshop.

Mr. Fisher said he would like to attend.

Chairman Bogardus said the sponsor is considering two dates for the forum and is seeking member availability for either of the dates and then gave the contact information to Mr. Fisher.

**Recess- Motion:** (Connolly, second Sorensen) to take a 5 minute recess passed unanimously at 6:50 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 7 p.m.

## **9). Old Business:**

**A). McCarthy Trail Tower-** Mr. Sorensen expressed concerns about the integrity of the building and potential vandalism. He said he visited the tower and found ice forming between the walls and the ceiling probably from a drain pipe. Other concerns include having the mural inside the building but open to the elements which will diminish the life of the painting and leave it exposed to vandalism. He said he planned to contact UNH Cooperative Extension about the possibility of available grants for historic buildings to assist with the cost to rehab the structure and for the mural project.

Mr. Connolly asked if the building would first need to be designated as a historic building in order to qualify for that type of grant.

Mr. Sorensen said he thought that would need to be done to qualify for the grant and the project is still in the informational stages.

Mr. Connolly said if the Commission decides to keep the tower open that the safety of the public visiting the building comes first. He added that he would hate to see the high school students put a lot of time and effort into painting the mural and then be damaged by weather or vandals.

Mr. Fisher asked if the members should consider blocking the entrance to the tower and to put up No Trespassing signs to warn visitors and to protect the Town from liability.

Mr. Connolly said he would contact the Town and suggest that the tower entrance be posted and blocked for safety reasons.

He said the characters that will be erected along the trail are still under construction by a Home Depot employee and that he has not had a chance to get an update on the status of the project.

Ms. Bogardus said she will contact Jim Horgan who is the store contact for the project.

Mr. Connolly said a mid to late May dedication ceremony is planned for the trail and that he would like to have the characters in place for the ceremony.

Discussion also included placement of the trail signs and the condition of the trail. Members plan to clean up portions of the trail once the milder weather arrives.

Ms. Taylor asked Mr. Sorensen if he had discussed the conditions at the tower with the high school art teacher.

Mr. Sorensen said he has discussed it with her after she had viewed the tower in late January. He said she expressed similar safety concerns and about the potential for vandalism of the property. He said he has not given up on the project and it is a work in process.

**B). Public Forum Interests-** Chairman Bogardus said she scheduled a forum on vegetable gardening for Wednesday, April 25 at 6 p.m. Roz Mason from the Master Gardeners will be the guest speaker. She said the Master Gardeners Speakers Bureau has a suggested donation of \$50 and asked if the members would like to make a donation to the bureau.

**Motion:** (Fisher, second Taylor) to make a \$50 donation to the Master Gardeners' Speakers Bureau;

**Discussion:** Mr. Connolly asked if a venue has been secured for the forum.

Chairman Bogardus said a venue has not been chosen and asked for venue suggestions. Members suggested the Public Safety Building, the Town Hall, the Friends of Farmington building and the library.

**Vote:** The motion passed 5-0.

Chairman Bogardus said she will check on the availability of the venues and report back to the Commission.

Members also discussed advertising the event on the Town website, on social media, in the local newspapers and with flyers around town.

Chairman Bogardus then asked for other topic ideas for public forums.

Mr. Connolly said he received an e-mail from the NH Assoc. of Con Com's (NHACC) who have offered to assist the Commission with putting on a forum about conservation easements. They suggested the Commission contact the Moose Mountains Regional Greenways (MMRG) for potential guest speakers. He said that the Southeast Land Trust (SELT) may be another source for speakers about this issue.

Mr. Connolly said he would forward the NHACC contact information to Chairman Bogardus.

**C). Any Other Old Business-** None

## **10). New Business:**

**A). Spring Cleanup-** Mr. Connolly said the cleanup is scheduled for April 29 with a rain date of May 6. He suggested the members start organizing the event.

Ms. Taylor said she will post the flyers for the clean up around town.

Chairman Bogardus asked about the location for the meeting place prior and after the cleanup.

Mr. Connolly said he will not be able to attend the cleanup due to a work commitment.

Mr. Fisher said he will provide the beverages and pick up the materials for the clean up at the Municipal Office Building (vests, bags, gloves, etc.).

Mr. Sorensen said they also need to contact the DPW for use of a truck for the trash hauling and the landfill scales.

Mr. Connolly said he would contact the DPW.

Ms. Bogardus offered to check the availability of the Public Safety Building for the cleanup date

and to ask the Police Chief for a Police detail for that day.

Ms. Taylor said she would contact Honey Dew Donuts for a possible donation of refreshments.

Mr. Connolly said that in the past they have also received donations from Circle K, Farmington House of Pizza and Crowley's Market. He added that Wal Mart had also donated a gift card for a past cleanup but it takes several months to receive the card so there is not enough time to get a gift card for this event.

Mr. Fisher suggested they ask Wal Mart for a donation now for the Fall Cleanup.

Mr. Connolly suggested they invite FCTV Coordinator to attend and advertise the event.

He then thanked the past participants and urged more volunteers to join them this year as the number of roads that can be cleaned up depends on the numbers of volunteers that come out to help.

**B). Commission Elections-** See Agenda Item #3

**C). Any Other New Business-** None.

**11). FYI:** None.

**12). April Dates:**

**A). Next Commission Meeting:** Wednesday, April 11, 2018 at 6 p.m.

**B). Spring Cleanup:** Sunday, April 29, 2018 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

**13). Any Other Business:**

Mr. Connolly said it has been an honor working with the Commission as Chairman for the past 9 years. He said Ms. Bogardus will do well as Chairman and noted that she has a great Commission behind her. He thanked them for letting him lead them and speculated that in 3 years he may return as a regular member of the Commission.

**SCCD-** Mr. Sorensen asked about the brochure the members received at this meeting from the Strafford County Conservation District.

Mr. Connolly said the brochure is their 2017 Annual Report which was presented for their information. He said the group's focus is farming and suggested they keep them in mind as a resource for potential future projects.

**14). Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (Fisher, second Taylor) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 7:30 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon, Recording Secretary

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Laura Bogardus, Chairman