

Town of Farmington  
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, December 12, 2018

**Commission Members Present:**

Laura Bogardus, Chairman  
Bill Fisher, Secretary  
Ann Titus, Selectmen's Rep.  
Michelle Elbert  
Tom Sorensen  
Richard Ballou

**Commission Members Absent:**

Randy Orvis, Vice Chairman

**1). Call to Order:**

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

**2). Pledge of Allegiance:**

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3). Public Comment:**

Tammy Cook, Physical Education teacher at Valley View Elementary School asked if there is a way to connect from the elementary school to the trail behind the high school. She said they started a clearing in that direction but they are unsure of the best way to connect to the trail. Chairman Bogardus asked if the area is over grown and needs to be cut back.

Ms. Cook said she was unsure if it should be cut but it is very narrow and hard to pass through.

Mrs. Elbert asked for the distance from the elementary school to the high school trail.

Ms. Cook estimated it is about 30 yards from the elementary school to the high school trail.

Chairman Bogardus asked for a description of the types of vegetation needing to be cleared.

Ms. Cook said the trees are about 4-5 inches in diameter and that there is also a stone wall between the 2 schools.

Mrs. Titus advised against moving any stone walls as there may be a regulation against it and it most likely serves as a boundary line.

Mr. Fisher said this would be a spring time project.

Chairman Bogardus said she thought this is a great idea and offered to help get a work party together when they are ready to begin the project.

Mrs. Elbert suggested trying to get the Boy/Cub Scout troops involved with this project. She then volunteered to head up the project for the commission and suggested that they get a small group together to view the trail area after the snow melts and map out the location for the connecting trail and to figure out the stone wall issue.

Chairman Bogardus said she will obtain contact information for the Boy Scouts.

Ms. Cook said she would discuss the plans with SAU Superintendent Ruth Ellen Vaughn.

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

November 14, 2018 – No errors or omissions

**Motion:** (Titus, second Fisher) to accept the minutes as written passed 5-0-1 (Elbert abstained).

#### **5). Old Business:**

**A). Beekeeping Forum-** Members who attended the forum held at the library said it was well attended and that speaker Amy Antonucci did a great job. Mrs. Elbert said there were about 20 people there and that some of the attendees are taking Ms. Antonucci's beekeeping course. Mr. Fisher said it was one of the better attended forums recently hosted at the library. Chairman Bogardus said people are interested in things that are related to a homesteading lifestyle and noted that Ms. Antonucci honestly explained how beekeeping is a lot of work. She then asked the members about giving a \$50 donation to Ms. Antonucci.

**Motion:** (Titus, second Ballou) to give Amy Antonucci a \$50 donation for the beekeeping forum passed unanimously.

**B). Timber Harvesting Forum** – Mrs. Elbert suggested it may be easier to schedule the forum if they pick a few dates for Forester A.J. Dupere to choose from. She said he is booked for Feb. and Apr. and asked if they want to schedule it for when it can definitely be held outside. Chairman Bogardus said she thought the forum would be more effective outside where people could see what is being discussed.

Mr. Sorensen asked when the work at the Town Forest is scheduled to begin and suggested it would be interesting for people to see some actual timber harvesting taking place.

Mr. Fisher said the problem with holding it at the Town Forest is the lack of sufficient parking. He said he liked the idea of seeing some actual timber harvesting but it may be difficult for seniors to get around there and suggested the McCarthy Trail behind the Public Safety Building may be a better location with more parking as discussed previously.

Mrs. Elbert said she would discuss the issue with Mr. Dupere and will suggest that the forum not be held before May.

**C). Moose Talk** – Chairman Bogardus said she had a tentative date for the moose meeting with NH Fish and Game Wildlife Biologist II, Moose Project Leader Kristine Rines of Thurs., Feb. 21 with a snow date of Thurs., Feb. 28. She said a venue has yet to be chosen.

**D). Animals Seen** - Ms. Bogardus said she also spoke with Ms. Rines about the various wildlife that show up in area causing concerns among the local residents and that Ms. Rines said she would try to find a speaker to address those concerns.

Mrs. Elbert said a friend from UNH told her of a program called "Gardening for Wildlife" which allows people to make peace with deer and other wildlife visitors.

Chairman Bogardus said the issue was brought up by Mr. Orvis at a previous meeting where he spoke about people unfamiliar with animals' normal habits that were "freaked out" by seeing certain animals during the day or want to help them somehow.

Mr. Fisher said some people want help turtles crossing the road but could cause more harm

than good if they don't know to move the turtle across the road in the direction it was going and to point them in that direction once across the road. He said if they are brought back to the side where they started from and not pointed in the right direction they could get lost and die.

**E). Commission Bylaws** - Chairman Bogardus asked if anyone wished to recommend any changes to the bylaws.

Members said they reviewed the bylaws and did not suggest any changes.

Chairman Bogardus said the issue will return to the January agenda for a final review and vote.

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

**A). Huppe Conservation Easement Amendment** - Chairman Bogardus said that the Southeast Land Trust (SELT) Conservation Project Manager Jeremy Lougee informed her that they purchased the abutting Stewart property on Sheepboro Road for an easement to the Huppe property. When the Huppe's first put their land into conservation there was a discrepancy regarding 2 acres of land located between the 2 properties and the discord between the owners had to be worked out. SELT convinced the Stewart's to transfer ownership of that land to the Huppe's and the Huppe's now have it as part of their easement she said.

She said Mr. Lougee wanted the commission to vote on the amended conservation easement at this meeting but the amendment is not yet in writing and she was advised not vote on the matter without a written agreement to review.

Chairman Bogardus asked for a consensus of the commission as to if they would support the 2.79 acres being added to the Huppe easement.

Consensus of the members was not to vote on the matter without seeing the amended easement and to table further discussion and the vote to the January meeting.

**B). Coca-Cola Grant** - Chairman Bogardus said she was contacted by a Parent/Teacher Assoc. member about a grant program available from the Coca-Cola Company. The program is titled "Coca-Cola/Keep America Beautiful" and is the 2018 Public Space Recycling Bin Grant Program which is designed to increase access to recycling in community spaces she said.

Ms. Bogardus said they could apply for a grant to get a recycling bin but there was no information about what type of bins they are. She said the application needs to be completed and submitted by Dec. 20 but grant writing is a detailed process in which she has no experience.

Discussion also included efforts to partner with school officials for a school recycling program.

Mr. Fisher said that about a year ago, he and former member Dave Connolly presented plans for a recycling program at a School Board meeting, volunteered to help develop a recycling policy and gave them information on the program. The board said they have a contract with a waste hauler whose services doesn't include recycling and there is about 2 years left on the contract. Mr. Connolly attempted to follow up on the discussion several times and their response was that they haven't reviewed it yet and there came a point where they stopped trying he said.

Members said they should try again next year to get a recycling program started at the schools.

Mrs. Titus said the school district can't change the terms of the agreement in the middle of the contract and suggested they talk to the SAU Superintendent and let her know the commission is still interested in starting a recycling program with the schools.

Mrs. Elbert asked if the school's trash is hauled to the Town's Transfer Station.

Mr. Fisher said it is hauled to a Transfer Station in Massachusetts.

Mrs. Elbert said it all comes down to educating students about recycling and composting the food they throw away. She said that is becoming a bigger issue and that she was curious about what the Town Transfer Station was doing about the disposal of the garbage that isn't being accepted by China.

Mrs. Titus said if the grant provider is willing to do the legwork they might be willing to talk to the school district.

Mr. Sorensen said the grant is only to provide the bins and after the bins are received the operation and maintenance of the program is the responsibility of the entity receiving the bins. Consensus of members was the grant is a good idea but it is too late to apply for it this year.

Mrs. Elbert asked if there vending machines in the district's 3 schools.

Mrs. Titus said there are no vending machines in the elementary school but there are some at the middle and high schools. She said the food service people are very careful when portioning out food to the elementary students and they try to find ways to control food waste such as by giving uneaten apples to the wildlife in the area.

Mrs. Elbert asked if the lack of a favorable response was because the information is not in place, people don't have time or they just didn't want to take the time to do it.

Mr. Fisher said he didn't know the answers to the questions. We needed a little push from the School Board or the SAU and it didn't go anywhere he said.

Mrs. Elbert said she would like to know how much it would cut the school's costs if they recycled and cut down on the weight of trash being disposed of by composting.

Mr. Fisher said it would cut hauling costs in the long run but it would increase initial costs for personnel to sort and prepare materials for hauling, purchase and maintenance of recycling bins and for pickup and delivery. He said he wasn't against recycling and composting but the district doesn't have the people or money to do it and suggested the new waste disposal contract should include provisions for recycling.

Ms. Bogardus said these programs are successful where the kids are really involved.

Mr. Sorensen said it also involves a change of habits.

Mrs. Elbert said the Common Ground Fair is a country fair in Unity Maine over 1 weekend where 1,000's of people come in. They have multiple garbage bins everywhere and all of vendors are required to use only compostable products. The students in the natural resources program can volunteer to work in the recycling center there where everything is composted on site or recycled immediately. To see this is amazing and to see the waste we have in our schools is deplorable. It's not difficult it's a matter of being conscientious she said.

Mrs. Titus said the school may have found it would be costly to get the program going and it would be cheaper to keep doing what they are doing.

Mrs. Elbert said it is part laziness, this is the way it has always been done, it takes too much effort to do something different and no one is willing to take it on.

Mrs. Titus suggested calling the local waste hauling companies and to ask for information about their recycling programs for schools and provide it to the Superintendent and School Board.

Mrs. Elbert said she would obtain the information from the local companies.

**C). Camera Damage** - Mr. Sorensen said that at one of the conservation properties a camera was damaged by a shot from a shotgun and showed the damaged camera to the members. He said two new cameras were purchased and the damaged camera was replaced.

Mrs. Elbert asked about the cost of the damaged camera.

Mr. Ballou asked if the camera caught a picture of the person who shot the camera.

Mr. Sorensen said the camera did not get a picture of the person and that the cameras are a little cheaper now than when this one was purchased.

Chairman Bogardus said they filed a report with the Police Dept. so that they are aware of it.

**D). BH Keith Invoice** – Chairman Bogardus said she received an invoice for \$250 from BH Keith for the trail review, meeting with the engineer and a site visit to the Ronci property on River Rd. Mr. Fisher said this is in regards to the plans to install a ramp and handicapped fishing access on the Mad River and after the original planned location was rejected Mr. Keith was going to look into finding a suitable location closer to the Route 11 area if possible.

**Motion:** (Fisher, second Titus) to pay BH Keith & Associates \$250;

**Discussion:** Mrs. Elbert requested that Mr. Keith be asked to include more information on his invoices about the work he is requesting payment for going forward.

Chairman Bogardus said she would pass the request along to Mr. Keith.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously.

## **7). Upcoming Dates:**

Next Conservation Commission Meeting – January 9, 2019

## **8). Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (Sorensen, second Titus) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 7:06 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon, Recording Secretary

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Laura Bogardus, Chairman