

Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 20, 2019

Commission Members Present:

Laura Bogardus, Chairman
Bill Fisher, Secretary
Michelle Elbert
Richard Ballou, 6:05 p.m.
Tom Sorensen

Others Present:

Dan Coons, Interim Director, MMRG

Commission Members absent:

Randy Orvis, Vice Chairman, excused
Ann Titus, Selectmen's Rep., excused

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: None

4). Dan Coons- Interim Director of Moose Mountains Regional Greenways:

Chairman Bogardus told the members that MMRG Executive Director Patti Connaughton-Burns has resigned and introduced Interim Executive Director Dan Coons to the commission.

Mr. Coons said he came before the commission to talk about the Leary property and said that the fundraising is complete but they are still hammering out the easement details. He said he sent Chairman Bogardus a copy of the easement thinking it was the final version but there was additional language regarding the LCHIP grant that needed to be added to the documents. He said once the documentation is completed the state and the Attorneys have to review them and then a base line documentation report will be done after the snow is gone from the property. We had hoped to close on this transaction in April but I suspect it's not going to happen that quickly he said.

Mr. Ballou arrived at the meeting.

Chairman Bogardus said the commission will wait for the easement to be completed and would not vote to accept it at this meeting. She said that previously the members voted to donate \$5,000 to the project and asked if they needed to do anything more at this time.

Mr. Coons said no action is needed at this time.

He said he also came to introduce himself to the members and noted that he has been the Chair of the Wolfeboro Conservation Commission for 15 years and is a wetlands scientist. He said the plan is for him to be the Director full time through the spring to allow the MMRG board time to determine what skills and experience they would like to see in a new Director and once

he/she is brought on board he will return to part time status.

Chairman Bogardus thanked Mr. Coons for meeting with the commission.

5). Review of Minutes:

February 13, 2019 – No errors or omissions

Motion: (Fisher, second Elbert) to accept the minutes of Wednesday, February 13, 2019 as written passed 4-0-1 (Ballou abstained).

6). Old Business:

A). Moose Talk – Chairman Bogardus said 15 people attended the meeting including a 5 year old boy who wants to be a Game Warden when he grows up. She said considering the weather forecast it was a good turn out and complimented speaker Kristine Rines on an interesting talk. She said highlights of the session are available on the Conservation Commission Group Face book page.

B). MMRG Annual Meeting – Ms. Bogardus, Mr. Ballou and Mr. Sorensen attended the meeting which was held 2 days earlier.

Mr. Ballou said the speaker on global warming did a very good job with the subject matter. Chairman Bogardus agreed and said she thought she did a particularly good job on how to talk to people without inciting political disagreements and get the word out about the issues. She noted that Mr. Sorensen entered one of his photos in the silent auction which was sold.

C). Snowshoe Trail – Chairman Bogardus said she contacted the Boy Scout Troop Leader and plans to meet with them on April 2 at 6 p.m. at the Henry Wilson Memorial School to discuss clearing and maintaining the trail behind the Valley View Community School. She said also planned to suggest they set up a maintenance schedule for some of the other trails overseen by the Commission which would benefit the users and the Scouts in meeting the requirements for merit badges.

VVCS Physical Education teacher Tammy Cook will also attend the meeting she said.

Mrs. Elbert asked if the volunteers for the larger jobs would need to bring their own tools and how to put out a call for that type of help.

Chairman Bogardus said she would look into how other groups such as the Nature Groupies handle this and that she thought each person would bring their own tools.

Mrs. Elbert said she thought that the UNH Cooperative Extension may allow volunteers to borrow tools.

Mr. Fisher suggested checking with MMRG for a source for tools.

Chairman Bogardus said some libraries have a tool loan program although not in Farmington. She said she would update the members at the April meeting and asked the members to bring any other ideas to that meeting.

Mr. Fisher asked if the school has contacted anyone regarding the rock wall on the property. Chairman Bogardus said Ms. Cook reported that everything is “good to go” with the wall.

D). Timber Talk – Mrs. Elbert said the dates chosen for this forum at the last meeting don't work as she will be out of state so she contacted Forester A.J. Dupere and asked him for other dates he would be available to speak on timbering. She said he is available on Saturday, May 4 or Saturday, May 11 and Thursday evening June 13.

Chairman Bogardus said she would propose May 11 as the rain date for the Spring Clean-up. After some discussion about which day of the week would facilitate a better turnout, consensus of the members was to ask Mr. Dupere to hold his talk on Thursday, June 13 at 6 p.m.

Chairman Bogardus asked Mrs. Elbert to ask Mr. Dupere to send her a synopsis of his talk. She said the venue has not yet been determined but that they hoped to reserve the Public Safety Building for the discussion so that the McCarthy Trail could then be used for the visual portion of the forum. She said she will check on the availability for that day and if it is not available they will have to come up with something else.

Mr. Fisher said there is clearing in the area of the McCarthy bench and suggested they advertise that attendees bring a lawn chair and the entire forum could be held outside on the trail.

Mrs. Elbert suggested that Chairman Bogardus still ask if the Community Room is available that night. She then texted Mr. Dupere to inform him of the date they would like him to speak.

Chairman Bogardus said once the information is confirmed they can put together a flyer to advertise the event.

E). Any Other Old Business – Chairman Bogardus said the name of the company that will be performing the forestry work at the Town Forest is MH Humphrey & Sons.

7).New Business:

A). NHACC Workshop – Chairman Bogardus said the NH Association of Conservation Commissions will be holding many workshops this year including one this Saturday on Easement Monitoring but that she would not be able to attend.

Mr. Ballou said he planned to attend this workshop.

Chairman Bogardus said the workshop on Transforming Conservation Properties-Agricultural and Stewardship to be held Tuesday, April 16, 5-7:30 p.m. at the Brentwood Community Center is another workshop that may provide a lot of useful information to the members.

B). Spring Clean-up – Chairman Bogardus said that previously the Commission has tried to schedule the Spring Clean-up near Earth Day but this year Earth Day is during Easter weekend so she went ahead and booked the Public Safety Building for Sunday, April 28 from 1-4 p.m. She said she and Mr. Sorensen are unavailable the following weekend so she hoped to schedule the rain date for Saturday, May 11 from 1-4 p.m. as that Sunday is Mother's Day.

Consensus of the members was to approve May 11 as the rain date for the clean-up.

Chairman Bogardus said she would ask to reserve the Community Room and the Highway Dept. truck for that date. She asked for a volunteer to get the refreshments.

Mrs. Elbert said it was difficult to get pizza donated for the last clean-up and suggested they have snacks instead.

Mr. Fisher said they could pay for the pizza out of the Con Com budget instead of asking for donations. He said it is a good reward for the volunteers and those people who have participated before look forward to the pizza party at the end of the trash pickup.

Motion: (Fisher, second Elbert) to authorize the expenditure of no more than \$100 for pizzas for the Spring Clean-up on April 28, 2019 or on the rain date of May 11, 2019;

Discussion: Mrs. Elbert asked who would volunteer to order the pizzas.

Consensus of the members was to determine that volunteer at the April meeting.

Vote: The motion passed 5-0.

Chairman Bogardus asked about the other supplies needed for the clean-up such as bags and safety vests.

Mr. Fisher said they have the vests, rubber gloves and plenty of bags and that he would pick them up and will bring them to the Public Safety Building on that day.

C). Trail Maintenance – See agenda item #6c.

D). Any Other New Business – Student Conservation Association- Chairman Bogardus said they received a letter from the association outlining the group's purpose/activities and informing them that the association is seeking project proposals for the June to October time frame. The letter stated they would send a trained 6-7 member crew and 2 leaders in a van equipped with tools, food and camping equipment and are available upon request to assist with pre-planning services she said.

Mrs. Elbert asked if the association would come to town and perform trail maintenance or trail creation.

Chairman Bogardus said trail maintenance is mentioned in the letter.

Mr. Sorensen said if the crews are trained in trail maintenance they may allow some of the Con Com members to act as interns for a project and pass their knowledge along to the members. Chairman Bogardus said the timeframe listed is from June to October but she would like to get started sooner due to rough conditions in areas along some of the trails.

Mr. Fisher suggested that a potential project would be the construction of the education center and the trails at the Town Forest as has been previously discussed by the commission. He said he thought this type of larger project would be more "up their alley" where the letter mentions the crew would be camping out rather than maintaining a portion of a trail.

Chairman Bogardus said the materials provided don't state any deadlines for submission of project proposals or applications for assistance from the group. She said she would contact them and get more information on the process.

NH DOT- Chairman Bogardus said they also got a letter from the NH Dept. of Transportation about adding a center turning lane on Route 11 from the Tractor Supply store to the Farmington Family Health Care facility.

Mr. Fisher said the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board also received copies of this letter and have discussed this issue. He said the DOT plans to shrink the size of the break down

lane and then re-stripe the road to add the center lane. The road belongs to the state and they are just notifying everybody that they are going to do it he said.

Chairman Bogardus said the DOT did ask if the Town has a list of priority mitigation efforts there and that she did not believe there are any such efforts along that section of Route 11. She added that the letter says the project is scheduled to begin in January 2020.

Grant Writing – Chairman Bogardus said that in a letter from NH DES they recommend that the Town continue to implement the Wellhead Protection Program and to consider additional wellhead protection measures. She said the letter was forwarded to the Con Com and that she believed that the Selectmen were asking if the Con Com could apply for a grant to assist in the cost of implementing these additional measures.

She said that the NHACC and the DES will be holding grant writing training sessions and asked if anyone would be interested in attending. She added she was not sure what was being asked of the Con Com.

Mrs. Elbert said the DES letter states they offer Best Management Practices training sessions and guidance materials as well as grant programs for water source protection and land conservation. She read a few passages aloud and said the letter was not written very clearly.

Mr. Fisher said it would seem that if there was a grant needed for the wellheads that the Public Works Dept. would be applying for the grant, not the Con Com. The Con Com doesn't take care of the town's wellheads he said.

Chairman Bogardus read a text message from Selectmen's Rep. Ann Titus which said the Selectmen would like the Con Com to look into a grant and said she would get more information from Mrs. Titus on what the Selectmen are looking for the Con Com to do.

Mrs. Elbert said she asked about any available general grant writing training at a previous Con Com meeting and Mrs. Titus may have thought she was offering her services across the board. Chairman Bogardus said she would forward the information on the NHACC grant writing workshops to the members. Seating is limited to 2 members per workshop if anyone is interested in attending them she said.

Church Festival– Chairman Bogardus said she received an e-mail from the First Congregational Church about their Bicentennial Festival that will take place in September as discussed at the previous meeting by Mr. Fisher. She said the church will hold a round table the next evening from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the church to discuss their participation and some historic sites in town. Chairman Bogardus asked when Mr. Fisher was talking about the old farm equipment at the last meeting if he was suggesting that would be the Con Com's participation at the festival.

Mr. Fisher said he suggested they could put up a pop-up tent and display tools that may have been used 200 years ago when the church was founded. He said it would depend on what he could find to display and that he planned to check museums, antique shops and people's front yards for display items.

Chairman Bogardus said she was unavailable to attend the round table and invited any

interested member to attend the church discussion. The next round table will be held on April 18 she said.

Correction: Chairman Bogardus corrected her earlier statement about the grants workshops. She said that the State Conservation Grant Programs workshop is offered through LCHIP and will be held on April 9 from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. in Concord. There is a list of specific grants the workshop pertains to on the flyer she said.

Trout Unlimited- Chairman Bogardus said that Colin Lawson contacted her that day and said they completed a 30% design and engineering plan for a culvert project in Farmington. Mr. Lawson said he talked to DPW Director Gary Rogers and they chose an area on Meetinghouse Hill Road and the Rattlesnake River to the Cocheco River. He asked her to come up with some dates to host a joint meeting with himself and the Milton Conservation Commission to speak about the program. She said that Milton has suggested either March 27 or April 10.

After some discussion, Chairman Bogardus said she would contact Mr. Lawson to propose that they hold the joint meeting on April 10 at 7 p.m. after their regular monthly Con Com meeting.

Cocheco River Advisory Committee – Mr. Fisher said the committee looked at the plans for the solar farm to be installed at the landfill as part of the state Alteration of Terrain permit process. He said the property will be enclosed by a fence to prevent unauthorized access and the fence must be raised 6 to 8 inches off the ground on the Cocheco River side of the parcel to allow for the turtle crossings. We looked at it and found nothing wrong with their plans he said.

Mr. Fisher said they also looked the mitigation plans for potential soil erosion or silt deposits in the river at the property along the Cocheco River on Washington Street in Dover where a huge building project will install hotels, a marina, river walks, condominiums and stores.

He said the Town has asked the committee to review the Army Corps of Engineers report for the levy on the Cocheco River in Farmington. There are some encroachment and erosion issues that they are trying to determine whose responsibility it is to correct, he said.

8). FYI: None

9). Upcoming Dates:

April Con Com Meeting: Wednesday, April 10 at 6 p.m.

Spring Clean-up: Sunday, April 28 from 1 to 4 p.m.

10). Adjournment:

Motion: (Elbert, second Ballou) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 7:12 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon, Recording Secretary

Laura Bogardus, Chairman