

Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 14, 2019

Commission Members Present:

Laura Bogardus, Chairman
Randy Orvis, Vice Chairman
Bill Fisher, Secretary
Ann Titus, Selectmen's Rep.
Michelle Elbert
Tom Sorensen

Commission Members Absent:

Richard Ballou, excused

Others Present:

Kirt D. Emery
Kirt Emery

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:

Chairman Bogardus asked Henry Wilson Memorial School student Kirt Emery to come forward and tell the members about his experiences at camp this summer which was sponsored by the commission.

Kirt told the members that he had a good time and participated in fire arms usage, archery, testing their speed while running with 100 lbs. in a backpack, playing games, canoeing down a rapid, fishing and eating good food. He said he made some friends while at camp and that the counselors were fun and one of the things he liked was the singing each morning.

Chairman Bogardus asked if he went camping while there.

Kirt said they camped out during the canoe trip.

Mr. Orvis asked what river they canoed on but Kirt said he did not know the name of the river.

Mr. Orvis asked if he saw any moose at the camp.

Kirt said he did not see any moose while at camp but there was an activity where campers were asked to see how far they could throw a moose antler.

Chairman Bogardus said she believes he didn't see any moose because they don't exist!

Mr. Fisher corrected that at least one moose exists and reminded her about the moose that was recently found in a resident's swimming pool that made the national news.

Chairman Bogardus asked Kirt if he planned to be at the commission's booth on Hay Day and if he had any questions about what he needed to do for that day.

He asked what he needed to do.

Ms. Bogardus asked him to put together some pictures or something to explain what he did at camp.

Kirt said he didn't take any pictures while at camp.

Mrs. Titus asked if any of his friends took pictures that he could borrow.

Kirt said none of his friends took any pictures.

Chairman Bogardus said she spoke with Kirt's mother who said someone from the camp had posted a video on the camp's website and that she was going to try to get still photos from it for Kirt's Hay Day report so that he could do a small display.

Mr. Fisher suggested that he write a one-page essay and be present at the booth for a few hours to answer any questions people may have. He then asked him some examples of possible questions he may be asked such as if he would recommend that their kids go to this camp.

Chairman Bogardus asked Kirt to come to the Con Com booth at 9 a.m. when the event opens to set up his display.

Mrs. Elbert suggested his essay could include his daily activities at the camp so people could get an idea how the days were structured there.

Mr. Sorensen said the idea is to share the fun that he had.

Mrs. Elbert said this will encourage other kids to apply to go to camp next year.

Chairman Bogardus said this was no-pressure assignment and that she was glad that he had a good time.

4). Review of Minutes:

July 10, 2019 – No errors or omissions

Motion: (Fisher, second Titus) to accept the Con Com minutes of July 10, 2019 as written passed 5-0-1 (Elbert abstained).

5). Old Business:

Hay Day – The members discussed preparations for Hay Day.

Mrs. Elbert and Mr. Fisher said they would lend their pop-up tents for the booth space.

Mr. Fisher said he would pick up the fur kit on loan from NH Fish & Game the next day and pick up the tables on Friday.

Chairman Bogardus said they do not have any chairs this year and encouraged everyone to bring their own chairs. She said the commission will only have 2 spaces this year as the Seacoast Area Mobile Market (SAMM) van will not be present because they could find anyone available to drive it that day.

Mr. Orvis said he requested the ATV Club booth be placed next to the Con Com booth so he could help both groups and asked if she knew if the Tri-City Trailblazers ATV Club was placed next to the Con Com. He said he asked for the club's location but couldn't get an answer because they were shuffling people around to accommodate some late registrants they couldn't turn down.

Chairman Bogardus said she did not know.

Mrs. Titus said she would be at the Selectmen's table starting at 10 a.m. but if it was slow there

she would try to help the commission at their table.

Chairman Bogardus said she would contact Mr. Ballou and see if he was available to help provide coverage at the table.

Fall Clean-up – Chairman Bogardus said the Fall Clean-up is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 20 from noon to 4 p.m. and the rain date is the following Sunday, Oct. 27th. She asked if anyone had any preference on the location for the meeting place.

She said Mr. Sorensen suggested that they try doing something to draw people in to participate such as a cookout possibly in Fernald Park.

Mrs. Elbert said that fall weekends are a very busy time for people with school, sports and Boy Scout activities underway.

Discussion also included starting to advertise the project earlier, reaching out to home schoolers and people looking for community service hours, having a contest with a prize for the most trash collected, how to keep track of the amount of trash collected, how to estimate the number of participants for possible incentives given out and for refreshments purposes and all of the extra work involved in planning, setting up and running a cookout.

Mr. Sorensen said the intent of the cookout would be to get people out of their houses, bring the community together after the clean-up was done and hang out together.

Chairman Bogardus said the committee has a couple of months to think about possible incentives to increase participation at the trash pick-up. She said it is more work for them but she would not mind doing the work if it would bring more people out.

She said she planned to have a sign-up sheet at Hay Day and try to get people to commit to it.

Mr. Fisher said the Selectmen had a Whistle Stop meeting where hot dogs were served and that the Town Administrator may still have the information on how much was bought, the cost, etc.

Mrs. Titus asked if Chairman Bogardus had considered getting a prior commitment from groups such as the 4-H Club, the football team, the local churches and the Town depts.

Ms. Bogardus said she will try to do that and has done it in the past but it hasn't worked out.

She said she would find out if they would be allowed to advertise and request volunteers in the church bulletins.

Mrs. Elbert asked how many hours of community service are required for the high school students. She said she will talk to the football coaches and try to push the event as an opportunity for them to get their community service hours.

Mr. Sorensen said it would be nice to get the whole athletic program at the high school involved and not just the football team.

Mrs. Titus suggested that she also call Assistant SAU Superintendent Diana DeNitto and ask if she would send out a staff e-mail informing them of the event and that they are looking for participants.

She said some people have reasons why they can't come to the trash pick-up and suggested they supply bags to people to do their own streets and then pick up the bags as they do for the

other roads done during the cleanups.

Ms. Bogardus said they would like to have a presence downtown but there are not enough participants to include the downtown area along with the outlying roads they currently do.

Mrs. Elbert suggested that maybe the Selectmen would be willing to clean up some of the downtown streets.

Mrs. Titus said she would ask the board for their thoughts on her suggestion.

Chairman Bogardus asked if she should advertise on Face book that the commission would provide bags for people who want to do their own streets.

Mrs. Titus said they could advertise that people could pick up a bag from the members on cleanup day and then do their own street when they can.

Mrs. Elbert suggested they ask if a supply of bags could be made available at the Municipal Building for people to pick up.

Chairman Bogardus said she would speak with the Town Administrator to see if the Selectmen's Secretary could hand out bags when requested.

Mr. Orvis said they didn't want it to get to the point where people are using this to dump their household trash.

Chairman Bogardus said this would only be for the cleanup week.

Mr. Sorensen said they could make it a 3 day event where they would have 3 days to pick up their street and then leave the bags to be picked up on that Sunday by the cleanup volunteers.

Mrs. Titus suggested limiting the bag giveaway to the Friday before the cleanup day to avoid having people take advantage of the free bags. She said the persons cleaning their streets would need to contact the commission so they would know where to pick up their bags on Oct. 20.

Mr. Orvis said he thought that it is important to keep Route 153 (S. Main Street) cleaned up as it is the first thing you see driving into town.

Mr. Fisher said the Boy Scouts take care of cleaning S. Main Street from the Irving Station to about a mile up the road.

The members then discussed the condition of the other roads leading into downtown such as Rte. 75/Elm Street, Cocheco Road, Paulson Road, Old Bay Road and Spring Street.

Mrs. Titus asked if there are cameras installed in the town conservation areas.

Chairman Bogardus there are cameras posted but not so you could see people trashing the roads in those areas.

She said any other thoughts on this matter could be sent to her by e-mail and she will respond.

Blue Job Signs – Chairman Bogardus said there has been an on-going fiasco with Blue Job Mountain and lost hikers. She said the Land Management Bureau at the NH Division of Forest and Lands has been working with an Eagle Scout and has finally gotten all but 2 signs installed at the trail junctions up there. The last 2 signs directing people over the trail across Scruton Road will be installed in the near future. They are also updating the overall trail map which will

be installed in the kiosk at the trail head on First Crown Point Road and possibly near the state's gate on Scruton Road. The Con Com will receive a free copy of the trail map after it has been completed in the next few weeks she said.

Chairman Bogardus said she had not heard any reports of lost hikers recently and asked if any of the members heard any such reports.

There were no reports of lost hikers from any of the members.

Mr. Orvis said he thought it would be easy to get turned around up there if it was foggy.

Chairman Bogardus said it is really easy to get lost there.

Mr. Sorensen agreed and added that some people have established their own personal snow mobile trails coming into the main trail so it is really hard to distinguish them from the main trail. He said he found the same problem at Pawtuckaway State Park where the ski mobile trails have meshed with the foot trails so at one junction there were 5 intersections but the map only showed three intersections.

Chairman Bogardus said she hoped the trails will be really well marked because hikers were showing up at peoples' houses on Scruton Road needing to be taken all the way back to Strafford. Those residents were not pleased and I don't blame them she said.

Any Other Old Business – None

6). New Business:

Forest Management Talk- Chairman Bogardus said she wanted to talk with the members about having a comprehensive forest management talk because she would like to get some education into town about general forest management practices. She asked the members for suggestions as to who they should invite as the speaker.

Mr. Orvis said he understood Chairman Bogardus' concern as he has heard people remark that when they cut an opening at the Town Forest they were clear cutting the land which was not the case.

Mr. Sorensen said the foresters did a good job with the cuttings and the only thing people may have to complain about is the tracks left by the heavy machinery.

Mr. Fisher said the tracks may be present for one season out of the year and usually "heal" themselves.

Chairman Bogardus said she did not know if anyone would show up for the talk and was looking for feedback from the members as to what to do.

Discussion also included that modern technology allows the cuttings to take place without much impact to surrounding trees or the land and the potential downside of timber cuts that are so clean is that they don't leave any slash (brush piles) for wildlife habitats.

Mrs. Titus said there were some questions/comments on the community Face book page and that she also received some phone calls about this topic. She suggested they hold a workshop at one of their meetings to talk about forestry and timber cutting and the financial side of it such as to what their budget is, what the Commission gets out of this, where does the money

go and how much they pay people to do this, etc.

Mr. Fisher suggested that Environmental Consultant Barry Keith of BH Keith Associates might be willing to speak at the workshop.

Chairman Bogardus said Mr. Keith is the person who is managing the Town forests and he could answer all of the questions about that. She said she would ask Mr. Keith if he would be interested in speaking at a workshop.

Mr. Sorensen suggested they consider asking Mr. Keith if he would attend their booth at Hay Day for an hour or 2 and answer questions instead of asking people to attend a workshop held midweek.

Mrs. Titus said that was a good idea and that Mr. Keith would be free to set up a display or give a presentation and the Con Com would be there to man the booth.

Mr. Orvis said he would like to see more landowners get into forest management with their own property. We have some landowners who are doing a good job but there are other landowners who are just letting the timber grow up and it is being wasted he said.

Mrs. Titus said she did not think most landowners have that information and didn't know they should be doing this with their land. She also suggested that Chairman Bogardus write down any questions asked at Hay Day so that she can get the correct information for the person.

Mr. Sorensen said Mr. Keith is also familiar with the forest properties and could answer specific questions about what was done there and why it was done.

Chairman Bogardus said she would contact Mr. Keith.

Trail Maintenance – Ms. Bogardus said she planned to put out a sign-up sheet for trail maintenance at Hay Day. She said the trail at the French property needs to be cut back and maintained. She asked the members for suggestions on a date for the maintenance work.

Mrs. Titus asked what the maintenance work would entail.

Chairman Bogardus said she was not yet sure of everything that needs to be done and that she was not looking for a lot of people to do the work.

Mr. Orvis said maintenance on a walking trail involves the use of cutting tool such as a machete to cut branches, brambles and bushes and then pushing them off to the side of the trail. He said another useful tool would be a cordless weed whacker.

Chairman Bogardus said a few people are needed to clear that trail a little and then maybe they could also work on the McCarthy Trail.

Mr. Orvis said in addition to cutting branches they may need 2-4 people to shift the bridge back if it was dislocated during the spring flood waters. He estimated it would take about the same amount of time for the maintenance work as it does to walk the trail itself-about 90 minutes.

Mrs. Elbert suggested they have some possible dates ready as people would be more likely to commit to helping out if they had some idea of when they were needed.

Mr. Sorensen suggested they just make a list of people who are potentially interested in helping with trail maintenance without including a work date at Hay Day.

After some discussion the consensus of the members was to ask people to commit to performing trail maintenance in late May and in August at the French and McCarthy Trails.

Congregational Church 200th Anniversary – Chairman Bogardus said the commission has been invited to attend a concert on Sat., Sept. 14 at 7 p.m. and a historic service on Sun., Sept. 15 at 10 a.m. with a time capsule ceremony at 1 p.m. in celebration of the church's 200th anniversary. She said the church is also asking if they wish to make a donation to the access ramp fundraising program which would make it possible for more people to attend the activities there. She said she did not know the legality of the Commission making a donation to a private organization but was putting the information out there for people to make a personal donation if they choose to do so.

Mrs. Titus said she would ask the Town Administrator if it legal for the commission to make a donation to the church.

Mr. Fisher said he knew they were allowed to spend their funds for educational purposes and things that would benefit the town as a whole but he didn't think it would be legal to use money that is given to them by the taxpayers to fund a private organization. We could take up a collection amongst ourselves and give it as private citizens but I don't think we can use taxpayer money he said.

Chairman Bogardus said the invitation says they would like to receive any donations by Sept. 5 which is before the next Con Com meeting and asked if they wished to take a conditional vote to make a donation if it is allowed.

Consensus of the members was not to take a conditional vote and not to make a donation from commission funds.

Any Other New Business – Master Plan Survey – Mr. Fisher said that on the Town website and the community forum and news Face book pages there is a link to the online survey that was developed in an effort to update the Master Plan. He said the survey asks what is most important to residents and what they would like to see happen in Farmington. He said it takes about 10-20 minutes to complete with spaces for written comments and urged residents to take the survey before the Sept. 30 deadline.

Hard copies of the survey will also be available at various places in town he said.

7). FYI:

Notices of Intent to Cut:

Meadorboro Road- Map R10, Lot 01- Owner, Louis Gregoire, no lot size given

Milton Road – Map R48, Lot 29, Owner Christine McClusky, 13 acre lot

8). Upcoming Dates:

Saturday, August 17 – Hay Day from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, September 11- Sept. Con Com meeting at 6 p.m.

Sunday, October 20 – Fall Clean-up from noon to 4 p.m. Rain date –Oct. 27

9). Adjournment:

Motion: (Orvis, second Sorensen) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 7:05 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Laura Bogardus, Chairman