

Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 11, 2018

Commission Members Present:

Dave Connolly, Selectmen's Rep.
Randy Orvis, Vice Chairman
Laura Bogardus, Chairman
Tom Sorensen
Bill Fisher
Patience Taylor, Secretary
Richard Ballou

Others Present:

Patti Connaughton-Burns, Executive
Director, Moose Mountain Regional
Greenways
Michelle Elbert

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:

Mrs. Elbert said she submitted an application to become a member of the Commission. She said she submitted the application online and was told the application would be discussed at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

Mr. Connolly said the Commission can have up to seven regular and three alternate members.

4). Moose Mountain Regional Greenways (MMRG) – Patricia Connaughton-Burns:

Chairman Bogardus said Ms. Burns would be arriving late to the meeting and asked the members to delay her presentation until later in the meeting.

Motion: (Orvis, second Sorensen) to table Ms. Burn's presentation until later in the meeting passed 7-0.

5). Review of Minutes:

March 21, 2018- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Connolly, second Fisher) to accept the minutes as written passed 5-0-2 (Orvis, Ballou abstained).

6). Vegetable Gardening Forum:

Chairman Bogardus said Mr. Sorensen posted the forum information online and noted that a lot of interest has been expressed about the topic. She the forum is scheduled for Wednesday, April 25 at 6 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.

Mr. Fisher reported that he has been posting flyers around town for event and also provided

copies for handouts at the Goodwin Library.

Mr. Connolly suggested requesting that the Selectmen's Secretary include the forum on the red banner that runs across the top of the Town website on the Friday before the forum as a notice to the public.

Mr. Fisher suggested the notice also be posted on the new Town Face book page.

Mr. Sorensen said he would contact Mr. Capello and ask him to post the forum on the Town Face book page.

7). Spring Clean Up:

Chairman Bogardus said the annual Spring Clean Up will take place on Sunday, April 29 from 1-4 p.m. with the volunteers meeting at the Public Safety Building.

Mr. Fisher said he will pick up the necessary materials (vests, gloves, trash bags, etc.) from the Municipal Office Building and bring them to the Public Safety Building.

Mr. Fisher will also provide beverages for the participants.

Ms. Taylor said Jodi Tan has offered to donate three pizzas for the volunteers.

Mr. Connolly asked if anyone has contacted the Boy Scouts to see if they are available to help.

Ms. Taylor said there is a new Boy Scout Troop Leader and that she will contact him to see if the troop is available for the cleanup.

Mr. Connolly said that he will not attend the cleanup this year due to his work schedule. He said he would try to meet up with the volunteers after the cleanup and thank them for their help.

He said he spoke with the DPW and they will make the rack truck and some signs available for the Commission to use and advised that the truck must be at the scales at the Transfer Station by 3:30 p.m. due to the 4 p.m. closing time. He asked Mr. Sorensen to take charge of the truck and to make sure to get a receipt of the weight of the trash collected for their records.

Mr. Connolly said the number of roads that can be cleaned depends on the numbers of volunteers that come out to help.

Members then discussed previous roads cleaned and possible locations for this year's trash pickup.

Mr. Sorensen said that in the past the group has only cleaned two roads and asked if this was due to safety concerns.

Mr. Connolly said it has to do with manpower but not necessarily with the Police. Chief Drury has been a previous pickup volunteer that covered one group while the on-duty officer went back and forth between the groups. He said he understood that this year Lt. Orlando will be monitoring the groups as part of his patrols for that day.

Mr. Sorensen suggested it may be easier to manage if the groups consisted of no more than four or five people based on the total number of people who volunteer.

Mr. Connolly said the start time is 1 p.m. and by time the safety talk is given and the volunteers are outfitted it is about 1:30 p.m. by the time they actually get to their assigned road and begin work. He said the work must be completed by 3:30 p.m. and asked how much can they

accomplish in two hours.

Mr. Fisher said a larger group of people is more visible and therefore may be safer.

Mr. Orvis said he is unsure if he will be able to participate due to a family commitment.

Rain Date for the trash pickup is Sunday, May 6, 2018.

8). MMRG Annual Meeting:

Chairman Bogardus said that she and Mr. Sorensen went to the Annual Meeting and asked Mr. Sorensen to report on meeting.

Mr. Sorensen said that Rodney and Judy Thompson were awarded Conservationists of the Year and received jackets from the MMRG.

Melissa Paley, Conservation Law Foundation Great Bay Piscataqua Water Keeper spoke about the eel grass eco-system. She said the health of the eco-system is declining due to the release of excessive nitrogen into the water systems by water treatment plants. He said she is encouraged by the town's efforts to reduce the amount of nitrogen waste from the waterways but said there is still a lot of work to be done.

Mr. Orvis noted that the nitrogen run off starts in this area and makes it way to the Great Bay. Mr. Sorensen said Ms. Paley spoke mainly about the problems with Salmon Falls run off in the Somersworth-Berwick, ME. area and she didn't mention any problems with the Cocheco River. He said Ms. Paley did mention how some towns have installed new infiltration systems and are working to reduce the amount of nitrogen in the water.

Chairman Bogardus added that Ms. Paley also said some towns clean up their water treatment plants and then decide they don't have to do anything else.

9). Any Other Old Business:

French Property Site Walk- Chairman Bogardus said she received an e-mail from Barry Keith of BH Keith Associates to notify the board that he is available for a site walk of the French and Dubois properties on Friday afternoon or Saturday morning.

After a brief discussion consensus of the members was to meet with Mr. Keith at the French property parking lot on Hornetown Road on Saturday at 9 a.m.

Mr. Connolly said he will not be available to attend the walk due to his work schedule. He said there are some residents that use the French trail extensively who have re-secured the bridge that became unsecured near the snow mobile bridge and suggested they ask Mr. Keith to check the bridge. He said that the residents suggested that a longer bridge may be needed near the Whaleback Rock portion of the trail to replace the existing bridge that was washed out during a heavy rain storm.

Mr. Sorensen added that two signs are needed to replace two trail signs that were damaged.

McCarthy Trail- Chairman Bogardus said she spoke with Jim Horgan who said the character cutouts being constructed by a Home Depot employee will not be ready for a May dedication of the trail. He said the employee who is painting the characters is working on her unheated porch

and has been delayed by the cold weather.

Mr. Connolly asked with the Chairman's permission, to take the lead on the trail dedication ceremony. He said he has been in contact with Mr. McCarthy's son who is putting together a guest list of people to invite to ceremony. He said he would like to schedule the ceremony for late May and suggested the members also walk the trail and check its condition and for areas that need to be cleaned up before the dedication is held.

Chairman Bogardus suggested they hold a trail maintenance day and advertise for volunteers on Face book.

Mr. Connolly said he spoke with the Interim DPW Director last month about the safety of the pump house on the trail. He said the Selectmen agreed there is a need to restrict access to the pump house for liability purposes. Public Works is scheduled to address the issue but he did not know when he said.

Mr. Sorensen said he has been talking to the high school art teacher about trying to retain the opportunity for the students to paint the mural at the structure while not putting anyone at risk for their safety. He said he has a new idea for the project that he would like to present for the members' consideration.

He said they could purchase $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood with paper adhered to one side and have the students paint on the wood and then install the pieces in the window openings. He suggested that a door could be cut to the size of door frame and be installed with a padlock on it and then paint the trim to neaten the appearance of the building. The Town would not have to address the inside of the building which would take care of any safety concerns inside and it would keep the project going for the high school students he said.

Mr. Sorensen said that they could also take the wood paintings down in four years and allow new students to paint new pictures for the window openings. He said there are six or seven windows in the building and it could become a revolving art project for students in town.

Chairman Bogardus said this would also make it easier to fix any vandalism at the site.

Mr. Sorensen said if the paintings received a coat of polyurethane it may be possible to just wash or clean up the vandalized surfaces.

Mr. Fisher estimated that $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood costs about \$30-\$40 a sheet and would be "doable".

Mr. Sorensen said the windows are tall (approx. 3' x 6') but he did not have the window measurements with him so he could not say how much plywood would need to be purchased. Consensus of the members was to move forward with getting prices for the materials needed. Mr. Sorensen said the art teacher liked the plan as well and that he will meet with the class at some point to see what their thoughts are about the paintings.

Town Forest Public Hearing- Mr. Connolly asked if the Chair had contacted Mr. Keith about the Public Hearing to be held in May to discuss a plan that includes a timber cut in the Town Forest. Chairman Bogardus said she had not yet contacted Mr. Keith about the Public Hearing and said she would contact him and the Town Administrator about the correct posting procedure.

Public Forum- Mr. Connolly said the Commission previously discussed holding a public forum on conservation easements and asked for an update on the issue.

Chairman Bogardus said she spoke with Barbara Richter of NH Assoc. of Con Com's who said she could present a basic forum using laymen's terms on what conservation is and what Con Com's do on a very down to earth level. She said Ms. Richter suggested that she have a discussion with the public and then let the public discuss their ideas. She also suggested there could be a second forum planned to delve a little deeper into the subject if there seems to be any interest in doing so.

Chairman Bogardus said that MMRG may be a little too technical for the first presentation but they would be the go-to group for any subsequent public discussions. She suggested the forum be posted on other community Face book pages to draw more interested people to the forum.

More Forum Ideas- Mr. Orvis suggested they plan a forum on Best Management Practices. He said anyone can rent excavating equipment and a lot of homeowners are doing their own landscape projects without knowing anything about those practices. This is how we are getting a lot of sediment, turbidity and excess nitrogen in the water he said.

Mr. Connolly suggested that the local businesses and the Strafford County Conservation District that rent out earth working equipment might be willing to participate or to sponsor the event.

Mrs. Elbert said they may also want to include permaculture methods as part of the discussion as some water pollution is caused by over fertilization.

Mr. Orvis said someone from the Wetlands Bureau or Natural resources sections of NH Dept. of Environmental Services might be interested in conducting the forum. He said he would contact a DES administrator about the event.

Mr. Connolly said NH Co-op Extension may be a resource for speakers.

Eversource Tree Trimming- Mr. Fisher told the members that Eversource has planned to trim trees and brush adjacent to and under their lines and equipment along Poor Farm Road which is a designated Scenic Road.

The Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on the matter in May he said.

Mr. Connolly suggested the members could attend the Public Hearing to get more information about the utility's plans. He added that typically they offer the mulch and cut wood to landowners first.

Mr. Fisher said they do not have an exact date for the hearing due to the posting/publishing requirements for Public Hearings. He said the date will be posted on the Town website and in the newspaper as soon as it can be arranged with Eversource to meet those requirements.

Mr. Fisher left the meeting at 6:43 p.m.

4). MMRG (continued):

Motion: (Orvis, second Taylor) to return to agenda item #4 passed 7-0.

Ms. Burns arrived and told the members the group finished their Conservation Action Plan and are sharing their maps with the towns. She said the five maps presented are probably the most

useful maps of the overall region as they contain the conservation areas in your own and neighboring towns. She said they are working documents and asked the members to let the MMRG know if anything was missing on the maps.

Ms. Burns said the bundle of maps includes a recreations map, conservation priority areas map, a greenways map with arrows depicting possible conservation areas that allow for animal migration and a code currents map.

The members then gathered around the table to view the maps and listen as Ms. Burns described information included on each of the maps.

Ms. Burns said 38 stakeholders with backgrounds in education, natural resources management or business owners interested in recreational pursuits were asked to vote on the areas important to the region. There was also a survey send out to the public she said.

Mr. Connolly said there are a couple of conservation easements that are currently in process and the existence of prime soils on the property was one of the biggest factors in submitting the applications.

Mr. Sorensen asked if any of the maps are available in digital form so they can be posted on the Con Com Face book page.

Ms. Burns said the maps are available in digital format and gave the members each a flash drive on a lanyard that contained digital copies of the maps in letter size (8 ½" x 11") and in full size (3' x 4') and a copy of the 223 page Conservation Action Plan.

Mrs. Elbert asked if the maps could be found on the MMRG website.

Ms. Burn said the maps are on the website but they may take a while to download if the user's bandwidth is small. She suggested the maps would be useful for when development plans come before the boards.

Mrs. Elbert asked if the UNH Cooperative Extension Program or the Master Plan take the location of prime soils and natural resources in consideration with their plans.

Mr. Orvis said the Steering Committee is looking more at redeveloping the downtown and the old Fire Station areas and not at developing areas that are undeveloped.

Mr. Orvis said the Planning Board is considering the Form Based Codes system and he provided the Town Planner with information about the transfer of development rights which would allow more density downtown while conserving other land for the board's consideration.

Mr. Connolly said someone from MMRG approached the Commission eight or nine years ago to ask about their conservation priorities which provided the basis for these maps.

Ms. Burns pointed out areas encircled in red lines that signify the aquifers in the area that can enhance the drinking water in the whole region. Farmington connects to 5,000 acres of conservation land in the southern portion of Strafford County and provides an amazing place for habitats she said.

She said on the Greenways map, the arrows show the most likely routes for animals and for recreational uses for the future.

The recreation trails map shows existing trails and provides a sense of where you can go from here. She said some trails in the area are missing and the maps will be updated when the next round of funding is received.

Mr. Connolly said he has been working with the Assessor's Office and there is now over 2,500 acres of Town-owned and privately owned land with full conservation easements which equals about 1/10th of the total acreage in town.

Mr. Connolly asked if the closing date for easement on the Leary property has been determined.

Ms. Burns said the earliest would be in October but it could go into 2019 depending on the number of transactions involved. She said the proposal still needs to go before the Board of Selectmen for approval and the Planning Board for a lot line adjustment.

Mr. Connolly advised Ms. Burns to contact the Town Administrator to get on the Selectmen's agenda whenever they feel the plan is ready to move forward.

Ms. Burns said they are working on the language for the easement and once it is approved by the organizations involved it will be brought before the Town for approval.

Recess: Motion: (Bogardus, second Connolly) to take a short recess passed 6-0 at 7:08 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 7:18 p.m.

10). New Business:

MMRG Membership Dues- Chairman Bogardus said she received a renewal notice and asked the members if they wished to renew the membership in the MMRG at a cost of \$100.

Motion: (Orvis, second Ballou) expend \$100 passed 6-0.

Chairman Bogardus said the form also contains a space for feedback if any of the members had any comments/suggestions for the group. She then asked the members to write their contact information on the form.

Japanese Knotweed- Mr. Connolly said Selectmen had a presentation from a resident about the invasive weed that is invading Russell Lane. He gave the Chair a copy of the handout from the Agriculture Dept. provided by the resident.

He said a place has been found at the Transfer Station to store the weed cuttings until they dry out and can be disposed. He said the Chair may want to ask if the Commission can be of any assistance to the Town/resident in managing the weed.

11). FYI:

Intent to Cut:

A). Waldron Road, Map R48, Lot 15-2, 30 tons of pine, 200 tons of whole tree chips

B). Pound Road, Map R31, Lot 29, 100 tons of bulk wood and whole tree chips

Mr. Connolly said the cutting on Pound Road is to allow the Town access to the Osgood property to get to where the Town well is located to install a solar panel to power the pump and the monitor at the site.

12). May Dates:

Next Meeting- Wednesday, May 9 at 6 p.m.

McCarthy Trail Dedication – TBD

Public Hearing on Town Forest – TBD

13). Adjournment:

Motion: (Orvis, second Ballou) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 7:40 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Laura Bogardus, Chairman