

Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 8, 2020

Commission Members Present:

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

Commission Members Absent:

Richard Ballou

Others Present:

Donna Ellis, HWMS Counselor
Heidi Teto
James Colbath
Kalab Colbath

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). Review of Minutes:

December 11, 2019 – No errors or omissions

Motion: (Fisher, second Titus) to accept the Dec. 11, 2019 minutes as written passed 7-0.

5). Old Business:

a). Barry Camp Candidate – Chairman Bogardus introduced Henry Wilson Memorial School Counselor Donna Ellis and HWMS camp candidate Kalab Colbath to the members and viewers.

Ms. Ellis said they have been excited to work with the commission as a group interested in conservation that has come to the school in an effort to interest the students in conservation. She said Kalab wrote and submitted an essay expressing his interest in attending the Barry Conservation 4H Camp in Berlin, NH and presented him to the commission.

Kalab said he is a 6th grade student at HWMS and gave the members copies of his essay and then it aloud to them. (See attached).

The members complimented Kalab on the content, punctuation and effort he put into his essay. Mrs. Titus said his writing was "outstanding" and that it took courage to come before a group of people he does not know and be on camera and that she was very proud of him.

Mr. Fisher said he learned how to hunt and fish at an early age down in Texas. He said he has always loved the outdoors and that he would like to see as many kids outside as possible

instead of watching TV or playing video games inside as Kalab mentioned in his essay.

Mr. Orvis advised Kalab to keep his eyes open as one night he saw a possum outside his home and that on a previous occasion there was a bear in his yard.

Mr. Sorensen said he liked Kalab's well written essay and that he appreciated him coming in and sharing it with the commission.

Mrs. Elbert said she seconded everyone's comments and thanked Kalab for putting the time and effort into his essay.

Mr. Fitzgerald said he thought the essay was fantastic and that he understood what it takes to come before a group of strange people and speak to them. He said he has seen some of the same animals in his yard that Kalab wrote about and that he hoped everything goes well for him in this effort.

Chairman Bogardus asked if Kalab had chosen which session he would like to attend.

Ms. Ellis said Kalab was interested in a couple of the camp sessions.

Chairman Bogardus said she did not have the schedule with her and that the deadline for registration is in February so he needs to decide on which week he would like to attend and asked Ms. Ellis to send his decision to her in time to meet the deadline.

Motion: (Orvis, second Fitzgerald) to award the scholarship to Kalab passed 7-0.

Mr. Fisher asked Kalab to come to the Con Com booth at Hay Day in August with a story board about his week at camp and to answer questions about his camp experiences.

Ms. Ellis said if the commission has other ideas for interacting with the students to reach out to her with their ideas. Ann (Titus) knows where to find me she said.

Mr. Orvis said there are openings for students to become members of the commission.

Chairman Bogardus said she would be in touch with Ms. Ellis with more information about any age requirements for student commission members and the cleanup days and trail maintenance events that the students could get involved in.

Mr. Fisher then told Kalab's parents, Heidi Teto and James Colbath who were seated in the audience, that they have one fine young man and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

Mrs. Elbert said that maybe the key to getting kids involved is to start with the younger kids by lowering the age for student commission members as the juniors and seniors are very busy with many other things.

Mr. Orvis recalled that part of the reason for having high school student members is to provide them with an opportunity to fulfill some of their community service requirements.

Mrs. Titus said she would talk to Diane Hager about the community service requirements.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked about getting more students involved with Con Com booth at Hay Day.

Chairman Bogardus said the 4 H Club usually participates with activities for the kids on Hay Day which brings in lots of kids and that they hand out trail maps for the families to enjoy.

Mr. Orvis said a lot of the student involvement as commission members was due to the efforts of the previous science teacher at the high school who came to the meetings and took

advantage of Con Com activities and the conservation lands for some of their field trips.

b). By-laws – Mrs. Titus said the bylaws posted on the Town website are not correct because it is not the most current version and does not contain any of the members' signatures.

She said she e-mailed Mr. Capello and told him that Chairman Bogardus was wondering about the bylaws as they are looking into revising them and that she was checking with him about it. She said Mr. Capello replied that he has the correct version of the bylaws that need to be changed and that he would leave a copy for the commission.

Mrs. Titus advised that they go through this set of bylaws and see if anything needs to be changed and that was no rush because there is no deadline for approval by the Selectmen.

Chairman Bogardus said she would request a digital copy of the correct bylaws and e-mail copies to the members. She asked them to review the correct bylaws and have any suggested changes ready for their next meeting.

c). Any Other Old Business – The Chair Comes Clean – Chairman Bogardus said that she, Mrs. Titus and Mr. Sorensen met to discuss what to put into the packets for applicants for membership on the commission. She said that she was supposed to announce that they are a subcommittee of the commission and that they were having a meeting.

Mrs. Titus said they decided to go to breakfast and they talked about commission business and they should have posted the meeting.

Mrs. Elbert asked if notes were taken at this meeting.

Chairman Bogardus said they didn't take any notes because a quorum of the members of the commission was not present so she didn't think it was required. She said the Town Administrator has advised her that they are required to post it and to take minutes of the meeting and this discussion was her "coming clean" about it. We discussed the applicant packets which have not been put together yet due to my illness and I will have a rough draft of the materials to be included so people applying to be a member of the commission will have some idea of what to expect she said.

Forum Plans – Chairman Bogardus asked if any of the members have followed up on any of their leads for public forums as discussed at last month's meeting.

Mr. Orvis said he hasn't been able to do much yet with his idea for a forum on invasive plant species to recent health concerns.

Chairman Bogardus said she is in touch with the UNH Cooperative Extension and that she could talk to them about providing a speaker for this topic at a public forum maybe this spring.

She said that the Goodwin Library has good community outreach and they may be able to provide a venue to hold a forum.

Mrs. Elbert said that the lifts have been installed at the library so there is now better access to the space upstairs in the building.

Mr. Fisher estimated the space could hold about 50 people.

Mrs. Titus said they may attract more people by offering refreshments at the end of the forum.

Mr. Fisher said he was unable to reach his contact on lead abatement over the holidays. He said he would try to reach him again to see if someone was available in March or April and report back at their next meeting.

Chairman Bogardus asked if the members wanted to host a snowshoe hike possibly led by Mr. Orvis.

Mr. Orvis said at this point there is no need for snowshoes although 5-6" of new snow was forecast for this evening.

Chairman Bogardus suggested they discuss this idea again next month and consider setting up a hike sometime in March.

Mrs. Elbert asked if the Valley View elementary school got their snowshoe path done.

Chairman Bogardus said an Eagle Scout is working on this project with the advisor and she let them "take the reins" for this project.

She said she is talking with someone about a doing a forest talk in late May or June and that she planned to speak with her again on Friday.

ATV Club- Mr. Orvis said he would be meeting with the New Durham Board of Selectmen to get permission to use some trails there and that he also has received permission from some Farmington property owners to use their properties as part of a trail system here. He said once the trail system is up and running they may want to put on a presentation about trail etiquette. He said that most off road RV riders are good but there is that less than 1% that makes everybody look bad. The club has decided to start investing in trail cams to install at some problem spots and one reason is because they have been so successful for the Con Com he said.

6). New Business:

a). Photo Op – Chairman Bogardus said that it was time to take a picture of the members for the Annual Town Report.

Consensus of the members was to take the picture following the end of this meeting.

b). Bee a Pollinator Promoter – Chairman Bogardus said the Kingston Conservation Commission has a new program called Pollinator Pathways and that she put a copy of a recent article entitled "Small Changes for Small Creatures" (written by Barbara Richter for the NH Assoc. of Con Com Winter 2020 Taking Action for Wildlife Newsletter) regarding the program in their meeting packets. She said right now they are focusing on getting other Rockingham County communities involved in the Gardening for Pollinators and Wildlife program and then plan to slowly spread out to other towns and that eventually there may be an opening for a liaison from the Farmington Con Com to work with them on this project. She added that at some point she would love to hold a forum on pollinator gardens too.

c). Timber Cut Proceeds - Chairman Bogardus said that BH Keith sent the commission a check for logging at the Town Forest lot in the amount of \$22,209.96.

Mr. Fisher asked if a motion was needed to accept this money because it is more than \$5,000.

Mr. Orvis said this payment is part of the contract with Mr. Keith that the commission has

already accepted.

Mr. Fisher said the Selectmen have had to make motions to accept unexpected funds.

Mrs. Elbert asked if they anticipated the amount would be this high.

Mr. Orvis said this may be the highest amount they have received so far in one check and in the past they received checks for \$15,000 for logging the Dubois property and \$9,000 for logging the French property. He added the commission approved the timber sale and held a Public Hearing on it.

Mrs. Titus asked if the commission's past practice to accept money included a motion to accept the funds.

Chairman Bogardus and Mr. Orvis said that previously the commission did not make a motion to accept these funds.

Mrs. Titus said she would check with the Town Administrator as to proper procedure to accept the money and they could make a motion to accept it at the next meeting if necessary.

Chairman Bogardus said she would submit the check to the Finance Administrator and ask her to deposit it in the conservation fund.

She then read aloud the letter accompanying the check from Mr. Keith which stated that the Selectmen voted to waive the timber tax for this project and that per the agreement the logger is responsible for the payment of the tax. He said the stumpage prices stated in article #4 of the agreement were based on the logger paying the estimated timber tax and where the logger was no longer responsible for the tax he renegotiated a fair market increase for the timber which is reflected in the prices listed on the summary sheet. The logger was willing to work with us and we were able to secure more money for the conservation fund he said.

d). Wetlands Permit Notification – Chairman Bogardus said she received a Notice of Major Impact letter from DES regarding a wetlands permit within the bed and bank of Dames Brook to replace an existing deteriorated 22' wide x 84' long steel plate arch with a 26' wide x 84' long open bottom arch culvert within the same general footprint.

She then asked for the location of Dames Brook.

Mr. Fisher said this permit may be to replace the culvert that washed out at the entrance to the Farmington Ridge Mobile Home Park. He said the bridge also washed out and was condemned and the residents have had to use Winter Street to enter the park which is normally for emergency use only. It's at the end of Dick Dame Lane where it comes to a dead end and then curves around to the left and goes into the trailer park he said.

He said the commission can expect to see more wetlands permit notifications due to changes at the state level requiring the permits to come to the commissions for review and comments.

Any Other New Business – New/Renew Members - Mrs. Titus said she asked the Town Administrator about sign-ups for board members and he said that the sign-ups for any board will run from 01/21/20 to 01/31/20.

Chairman Bogardus said the Town website lists Mr. Fitzgerald's term as being up in 2020 but he

just joined the commission and asked if he needs to reapply.
Mrs. Titus said he would have to reapply as his term would be up in March 2020.
Chairman Bogardus said Mr. Ballou's term is up this year and he will also have to reapply.

7). FYI:

Intent to Cut Notice- Tax Map U07, Lot 015, Route 11, lot size 166 acres, 30 acres to be cut.

8). Any Other Business:

Library Forum - Mr. Fisher said that on Tuesday, January 14, 2020 the Goodwin Library will host a free forum on Herbal Remedies. The speaker will be Patty Nolan who is a certified Herbalist. He suggested that they also check out the new lift which provides handicapped access to the second floor.

Public Hearing - He said there will be a Planning Board Public Hearing on Thursday, January 9, 2020 in the Selectmen's Chambers on the proposed zoning amendments that will appear on the March ballot. He urged residents to attend and give the board some input on the amendments.

Young Recycler - Mrs. Titus said the young boy who is working with Waste Management on recycling materials and his family will be out of town and they asked that she check back with them in February. She suggested that if the family attends the meeting they could speak during the public comment portion of the meeting if they are not included on the agenda.

Discussion also included presenting the boy with an award, a framed certificate or gift card to recognize him for his efforts. No decision was made.

8). Upcoming Dates:

February Con Com Meeting - Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2020 at 6 p.m.

9). Adjournment:

Motion: (Elbert, second Sorensen): to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 6:52 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Laura Bogardus, Chairman