

Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 12, 2020

Commission Members Present:

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

Commission Members Absent:

Richard Ballou

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:

July 15, 2020 – Public Meeting Minutes - No errors or omissions

Motion: (Elbert, second Fisher) to approve the minutes as written passed 4-0-3 (Fitzgerald, Orvis, Connolly- abstained).

5). Old Business:

a). McCarthy Trail Update- Mr. Fisher said they need to find out if the holes for the signs still exist or if they need to be re-dug but he has not been able to contact Jim Horgan and it has been too hot to go out to the trail.

Mr. Orvis asked for the depth of the holes.

Mr. Fisher said the holes go about 2'-3' into the ground and they intended to set the 4 x 4 posts in concrete but the concrete has set and he didn't think Home Depot would give them any more concrete. He said Mr. Sorensen suggested breaking up the old concrete and putting it in the holes and add dirt and water which should make the concrete reusable.

Mr. Orvis said they may be able to put up the posts just by tamping them down real well and being in the woods they wouldn't be taken down by wind gusts like they would out in a field.

Mr. Fisher said they would be sticking up about 4'-5' above the ground and are made with sturdy materials so they aren't going anywhere.

Chairman Bogardus said they just need the manpower to finish the work.

Mr. Fisher said the other issue is getting a vehicle to transport the heavy materials to the trail

and to the sites along the trail. He said they may be able to rent something to tow a cart/trailer. Mr. Connolly said the Selectmen granted the library's request to add story boards to the trail. He said stories will be placed along the trail until October when Children's Services Director Kayla Morin-Riordan will come back before the Selectmen and report on how it went and if they would like to continue the doing the displays. He asked if Mrs. Morin-Riordan has contacted Ms. Bogardus about the placement of the story boards on the trail.

Mr. Bogardus said she has not been contacted and she will try to contact her this week.

Mr. Fisher said he will discuss this issue with the Library Trustees at their Aug. 20 meeting.

b). Town Forest Sign Repair- Ms. Bogardus said Mr. Connolly wrote up a Request for Proposals for refurbishment of the conservation land identification signs at the Town Forest on Bay Road. She said they also previously discussed getting the work done through community service and she knows of someone looking for a community service project.

She said Mr. Sorensen suggested the signs should be power washed, treated and then painted. Someone doing community service may have a tough time getting a power washer out there she said.

Mr. Fisher said a large tank of water and electricity would be needed to power wash the signs.

Mr. Orvis said carpet cleaning companies generally have an on-board fresh water tank and can steam clean things this way and that he did his house that way.

Mr. Connolly said he asked about community service because of the expense involved with the RFP and hiring a contractor and with community service the only expense would be the materials needed for the project.

Ms. Bogardus said the person interested in community service may be interested in continuing with the commission and may get his kids involved as well. She asked how they would get the materials to wash the signs.

Mr. Sorensen said some type of portable power washer such as for truck, equipment and mobile home cleaning would have other applications as well.

Additional discussion included what type of paint to use, putting caps over the angled wood pieces to stop the rotting, repaint the lettering in white and how late in the year they can paint.

Mr. Sorensen said he would compile a list of the supplies needed and the cost.

Consensus of the members was to hold off on sending out the RFP to see if community service can be arranged.

b). Abbott's Grant - Mr. Connolly said when the commission spoke with Barry Keith about doing timber harvesting on the Abbott's Grant property the existing parking lot was to be enlarged and that has not happened.

Mr. Sorensen said when they walked the site with Mr. Keith he mentioned putting in rocks and that the Town would give him some fill for the parking lot.

Mr. Connolly said he spoke with the DPW Director at that time and he was agreeable to that.

Mr. Sorensen said they talked to Mr. Keith about having problems with people dumping trash

there and he suggested clearing the front of the lot and that he would have his crew clear out the small trees and the bigger ones that are dying and nothing ever happened.

Mr. Connolly said Mr. Keith always gave the commission a printed scope of work and this could be within the scope of work for that project. The project was split up into 2 sections one for each side of the mill pond so there may be 2 scopes of work- one for the Waldron's side and one for the Abbott's side he said.

Ms. Bogardus said she looked through the stewardship plan book and didn't find any scope of work there.

Mr. Connolly said the plan is a general forest management plan and wouldn't mention enlarging parking lots.

Mr. Sorensen said Mr. Keith would have given them an estimate and the parking lot work should be in there.

Mr. Connolly then recalled that Mr. Keith gave them a scope of work with his yearly contracts.

Ms. Bogardus said that she will need to look back further in the files for the scope of work.

Mr. Connolly asked if the area after the rocks on the Waldron's side has been re-seeded.

Mr. Sorensen said that area was not re-seeded and the re-growth there is all natural growth.

Ms. Bogardus said she didn't recall Mr. Keith mentioning re-seeding that area and she would check with him about it.

c). Planning Board Feedback- Mr. Fisher said the Planning Board appreciated the commission's feedback on the Natural Resources chapter in the Master Plan. He said they thought it was a good idea to put in trails at the Town Forest and fix up the old water tower and put in a learning center at the McCarthy Trail. He said he believed the well there was the first Town well in Farmington.

Mr. Orvis disagreed and said there was an old Town well on Mt. Vernon St. installed in the 1800's that had wooden water lines running from it. He said there may have been different water companies existing back then that got tied in together to become the first municipal water supply for the town.

Mr. Fisher said those wells were put in by private water companies for use on private property and the well at the McCarthy Trail is believed to be first one owned, installed and run by the Town. He said the old water tower needs some fixing and putting this as a goal in the Master Plan may help them to get grant money to pay for the repairs.

Mr. Connolly said trails and putting an educational center at the Town Forest are mentioned in the management plan developed by Mr. Keith.

Mr. Sorensen said a small picnic area could be put in front of the old pump house at the McCarthy Trail.

Mr. Connolly asked the members to keep in mind that anything done at the McCarthy Trail has to go through the Selectmen. He said when the new Public Safety Building was opened the Police Dept. asked him as Chair of the Con Com then about setting up a hiking trail in the

wooded section of the property and they did so. They got the sign and the bench and held the grand opening for the trail and that is the extent to which the Con Com is involved with the trail. It is Town property and is not conservation land he said.

Ms. Bogardus said they have also done some maintenance to the trail. She asked if they needed the Selectmen's permission to do anything at the Town Forest.

Mr. Connolly said they would not need the Selectmen's permission for that because the deeds state that land is set aside for conservation purposes and the Con Com has oversight over it.

Any major work done there that requires a contract would have to be approved by the Selectmen because the Con Com can't enter into contracts without the BOS' approval he said.

Ms. Bogardus said a learning center would be a building which would need BOS approval.

Mr. Connolly said that is correct.

d). ATV Club- Mr. Orvis said the club put the expansion of the ATV trails up into this area on the back burner for the past few months to repair the existing trails. He said as of last weekend the trails are repaired and all the trails are open so they are back looking at getting more trails here.

6). New Business:

a). Pollinator Pathways NH – Chairman Bogardus said she received a letter from PPNH who is looking for a volunteer County Ambassador to encourage pollinator gardens. She said if anyone is interested in doing this to her know and she would put them in touch with the organization.

Mrs. Elbert said she would be interested in becoming an ambassador for the group.

Ms. Bogardus said she would send the group's contact information to Mrs. Elbert.

b). Recreation Survey - Mr. Orvis said at the Economic Development Committee meeting the previous night they discussed the Recreation Activity Space Needs Assessment survey available online. He said the Rec. Dept. isn't the only one to offer recreational activities as the Con Com has the hiking trails.

Mr. Connolly said there is a reference to the trails in the survey.

Mr. Orvis asked everyone to complete the survey and noted that the Con Com has a lot to contribute to recreation in town. He said we should take more advantage of River Road and suggested some picnic areas could be put by the river.

He said he told the Selectmen he would like to see the bridge there replaced with a covered bridge which may even be a cheaper way to when it is time to replace it.

Mr. Connolly said the handicapped fishing area proposal fell through at the Ronci property and that closer to the road would be a good spot for a picnic area.

Mr. Orvis said there is also room for a picnic spot on the French property if it is an allowed use of the property. He said he would like to promote River Road and that is one of the things that could help economic development.

Ms. Bogardus asked if the commission can do anything at Ronci property.

Mr. Connolly said the land there is town owned but it is in a conservation easement.

Mr. Orvis said it was surveyed at the same time as the French property was surveyed but he

wasn't sure if the Ronci property was under a conservation easement.

Mr. Connolly suggested Chairman Bogardus check with the Assessing Clerk for the status of the Ronci property.

c). Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Fitzgerald! - Mr. Fitzgerald said he was unsure if he will be back in time to attend the Sept. Con Com meeting because he is traveling to Canada with his wife to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

7). FYI:

Mr. Orvis read the Intent to Cut for the following property:

Tax Map U2, Lot 30, .2 acres to be cut on an existing house lot.

8). Upcoming Dates:

Sept. Con Com Meeting- Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2020

9). Adjournment:

Motion: (Elbert, second Sorensen) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 6:50 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Laura Bogardus, Chairman