

Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Commission Members Present:

Laura Bogardus, Chairman
Bill Fisher, Secretary
Dave Connolly, Selectmen's Rep.
Michelle Elbert
Tom Sorenson
Larry Fitzgerald

Commission Members Absent:

Randy Orvis, Vice Chairman, excused
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:

September 9, 2020 –No errors or omissions

Motion: (Connolly, second Elbert) to accept the minutes as written passed 5-0-1 (Fitzgerald abstained).

5). Old Business:

a). McCarthy Trail Update- Mr. Fisher said he discussed it with Home Depot today and they said due to COVID-19 they will not be able to work on it until next spring. He said the placards belong to the commission and they can put them up if they wish to. Unless we can get some volunteers and equipment by the end of November I would recommend just holding off until spring and I could remove the attraction sign there so as not to confuse people he said.

Chairman Bogardus said they could try to find some volunteers for the project by posting it on Face book and sending an e-mail to "conservation interested" people.

Mr. Fisher said he has the sign in his truck and he hoped to have it sanded, painted and back up on the trail in about a week or so.

Mr. Connolly said for the most part he is available to help during the day on Mondays.

Mr. Fisher said they are going to need some type of vehicle to pull his trailer and the materials through the woods. He said most of the concrete has hardened though there may be some bags that are still good and they might be able to break it up and stuff it down in the holes to help with drainage in the post holes or put the poles in and pack earth around them.

He said the big deal is getting the 80 lb. bags out to the site and the amount of water they will need. I imagine we're going to need about 15 people he said.

Discussion then included possible ways to get water for the cement to the posthole sites.

Mr. Connolly said the Fire Dept. has to pump water from rivers or ponds for firefighting when there is no municipal water available and suggested they contact the Fire Chief to see if they have a portable pump and could assist them with getting water to the trail site.

Chairman Bogardus said they don't have a plan because they have been waiting on Home Depot so she would rather come up with a good plan first with everything needed including a transport vehicle and a solid core of volunteers and then execute the plan in the spring. She suggested that they table the work until spring and work on the logistics in the meantime.

Mr. Fisher he would keep working on the project and if they are able to come up with some volunteers before the end of Nov. they may be able to complete it this fall. He said the ATV group Mr. Orvis belongs to does a lot of maintenance on their trails and they may have a core group of people that wouldn't mind giving us a hand.

Mr. Connolly asked Mr. Fisher to print out a list of the things they need for this project and provide it to the commission so they all can work on it.

Chairman Bogardus said the story walk along the trail sponsored by the Goodwin Library is all set up and they spoke at length to one little girl who was excited about it.

Mr. Fisher said he has heard it is going over really well.

b). Town Forest Sign Repair – Mr. Sorensen said the Town Forest signs have been cleaned and are ready to be stained. He said he is waiting for them to dry out enough to apply the stain and that he appreciated the help with the cleaning from a nice young man named Sylvain.

Mr. Connolly said he saw the pictures of the signs and they look very good.

Mr. Sorensen said he was shocked at how well they cleaned up and they look like new signs.

Mr. Fisher said he was there the previous Saturday taking some photos and noted how clean the signs look and that the Town had fixed the sign that had been leaning over.

Mr. Sorensen said he did some clearing while he was there and planned to continue to do that each time he is there so it is more open into the parking lot which may reduce the number of incidences there.

6). New Business:

a). Barry Camp – Ms. Bogardus said the commission previously decided if the HWMS student chosen to go to camp this summer wanted to go next year they would still send him. She said she contacted his teacher but has not heard back yet.

Mr. Connolly asked if the student would still be within the age group for the camp.

Ms. Bogardus said she was pretty sure he is and will find out. She said the cost for him to attend did go up to a maximum of \$540 depending on which weekly session he picks.

Mr. Connolly said for the last few years, the commission didn't give the camper the option on which week and they picked out the week the student would attend the camp because the

camp fills up quickly and they can't save a spot for us in each group. That's why we picked the North Country Adventure week because it has a little bit of everything he said.

Chairman Bogardus said she did let him know they must reply sooner rather than later if he still wants to do it.

Mrs. Elbert suggested they pick a date he must reply by instead of leaving it open-ended.

Ms. Bogardus said she asked for a response before this meeting and would contact them again. She then asked for a motion to spend the amount to send the student to camp.

Mr. Connolly asked if the commission made payment for the camper to attend camp last year.

Ms. Bogardus said they paid it and they said they would refund it and she would check with the Finance Administrator to make sure it was refunded.

Motion: (Fisher, second Fitzgerald) to expend \$540 to send a child to Barry 4-H Camp in the year 2021;

Discussion: Mr. Connolly asked if the cost would come out of the 2021 budget-unless they pay for it before Dec. 31.

Ms. Bogardus said she was pretty sure they have paid for it in the year they decided on it so it would come from this year's budget.

Vote: The motion passed 6-0.

b). NHACC Annual Meeting – Ms. Bogardus said the NH Assoc. of Conservation Commissions' Annual Meeting is coming up on Nov. 7 and it will be a virtual meeting this year. She asked if any of the members were interested in participating in the all day event and no one was interested in attending. She said that Mr. Ballou may be interested in attending this meeting and they should vote to approve the expenditure in case he does want to attend because the NHACC meeting takes place before the next Con Com meeting.

Mr. Connolly asked for the cost to attend the meeting.

Ms. Bogardus said the cost is \$35 per member.

Motion: (Connolly, second Sorensen) to spend up to \$70 to allow 2 people from the Conservation Commission to attend the NHACC Annual Virtual Meeting passed 6-0.

c). NHACC Dues – Ms. Bogardus said the association's annual dues of \$275 are coming up and asked if the Con Com members wanted to be NHACC members again this year.

Mrs. Elbert asked about the benefits of the membership.

Ms. Bogardus said members get a discounted rate at the conference, representation at the state legislature, advice on legislative issues, access to technical assistance, conservation funding and education materials.

Mrs. Elbert asked if they have ever used anything that they offer.

Mrs. Bogardus said they have used it in the past and it's a good organization and resource.

Motion: (Fisher, second Elbert) to expend \$275 to pay the annual dues to the NHACC passed 6-0.

d). BH Keith Invoice- Ms. Bogardus said they received an invoice from Barry Keith for site inspections at the Town Forest and the French property lot for 2 hours at \$60 an hour.

Mr. Connolly asked what Mr. Keith inspected the lots for.

Ms. Bogardus said she did not know or when he went to the French lot.

Mr. Fisher asked if it was part of the annual inspection by the Forestry Service.

Mr. Connolly said that inspection would take more than 2 hours.

Ms. Bogardus said they were already billed and paid for that inspection.

Mr. Connolly said they talked to Mr. Keith about the Town Forest so it is understandable that he went there and he may have decided to check on the French property while he was here.

Motion: (Connolly, second Fisher) to pay the invoice to Barry H. Keith for \$120 passed 6-0.

Ms. Bogardus said she would check with Mr. Keith to see what he inspected at the French lot.

7). FYI:

MMRG -Ms. Bogardus said they got a note from Moose Mountains Regional Greenways thanking them for and to confirm the receipt of \$5,000 on 09/02/2020 for the Leary field and forest project. She read they were grateful for the donation and they look forward to collaborating on this project and elsewhere in the future. MMRG will be installing a kiosk at the site and they will let the commission know when that occurs she said.

Mr. Sorensen said MMRG plans to host a hike at the Leary property and he will post the event information on Con Com web page.

Mr. Fisher asked if there is a sign designating the Leary trails.

Mr. Sorensen said no and they are not publicizing it as an open trail yet.

Ms. Bogardus said she didn't think that they won't want it publicized it's just a progression of things that need to take place first.

Mr. Fisher said over the past year the Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) has been working on promoting outdoor play and the commissioners from the various boards are photographing the parks, playgrounds, trail systems, etc. in the towns. He said there are places in Farmington such as the French and Dubois conservation areas that are not on their maps and he was assisting with getting those 2 properties added to the map and was wondering if he should include the Leary property as well. The maps will be on the SRPC website and will identify recreational opportunities in Farmington he said.

Ms. Bogardus said the Leary property should be included as it is public but for a while they were not advertising it. She suggested that he talk to the Leary's about this.

Mr. Fisher said he may gather the preliminary information but wait until they put up the kiosk and add them to map later if he can.

b). Fall Clean-Up – Ms. Bogardus said she realized they did not do a fall clean-up this year and asked the commission if they still wanted to do one.

Consensus of the members was not to do fall cleaning this year and to do it in the spring.

Mr. Fisher said when he was at the Town Forest this week he noticed that somebody cleaned

up the area and it looked really nice. He said the McCarthy Trail was also looking good and it seems that people have been picking up their garbage.

Ms. Bogardus said none of the properties have had a lot of trash lately.

c). Ash Trees Update- Mr. Sorensen said Todd Johnson from the UNH Emerald Ash Borer project at the French property stopped by to look at the ash trees in front of the Municipal Office and they found larvae deep down in the lower part of the trees.

Mr. Connolly said the Selectmen plan to talk about this issue at Monday's board meeting.

Mr. Sorensen said he noticed 3 more ash trees lining Main Street and one of which is the huge tree just after the Town Hall that hangs over the whole road that appears to be fine right now.

Mr. Connolly said that Mr. Johnson wrote in his e-mail that this can start to affect all of the ash trees along the Main Street corridor.

Mr. Sorensen said Mr. Johnson estimated the large ash tree outside the Municipal Offices has probably been infested for 3-4 years and when it starts sending out a lot branches on the lower half of the tree it is trying to bounce back from all the bug damage in upper part of the tree. He said he has seen similar trees that look dead but are still standing and all of a sudden they fall.

Ms. Bogardus said Mr. Johnson plans to make a presentation to the Con Com in the spring after the French property project is wrapped up.

8). Upcoming Dates:

November Con Com Meeting – Wednesday, November 11, 2020 at 6 p.m.

9). Adjournment:

Motion: (Elbert, second Sorenson) to adjourn the meeting passed 6-0 at 6:36 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Laura Bogardus, Chairman