

Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 13, 2021

Commission Members Present:

Bill Fisher, Chairman
Laura Bogardus, Secretary
Doug Staples, Selectmen's Rep.

Commission Members Absent:

Randy Orvis, Vice Chairman
Richard Ballou
Larry Fitzgerald

Others Present:

Jim Melchionda, President, Lancelot Shores Improvement Assoc.
David Scher, Board Member, Lancelot Shores Improvement Assoc.

1). Call to Order:

Chairman Fisher called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2). Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3). Public Comment: None

4). Review of Minutes:

September 8, 2021- Public Meeting Minutes- No errors or omissions.

Motion: (Staples, second Bogardus) to accept the minutes as written passed 3-0.

5). Old Business:

a). Fall Cleanup- Mr. Fisher said they previously discussed having a fall town cleanup and the cost for 40 count trash bags purchased at Wal-Mart is approx. \$8. He said he didn't know when they can do the cleanup as his calendar is full up this month on weekends and that he is scheduled for surgery in November and asked if any of the other members wished to head up the project or if they should just wait until spring since it is late to get anything organized. Mr. Staples said it would have to be at the beginning of Nov. for him to be able to help. Ms. Bogardus said she would hate to skip it but she was unable to commit to it due some family matters. She said if somebody wants to take it on she will show up if she is available. Mr. Fisher said due to the commission being short on members he would like to postpone the cleanup until spring and that hopefully they will have more members by then. He said he hates to do this as the town could really use a cleanup. He said they have bags available if anybody in town would like to get some bags and he could possibly come by and pick up the trash if they called his phone number listed on the Town website. Mr. Staples said Saturdays are busy due to his kids' sports schedules but it would not be a problem to do the pickups on Sunday. Ms. Bogardus said that isn't the ideal way to do it but that may be an alternative for this year.

She asked if they wanted to dedicate a timeframe for residents to tell them where to pick up the bags of trash.

Mr. Fisher said he was available on Oct. 23 or Oct 31.

Ms. Bogardus suggested instead of saying a specific day to say during these 2 weeks they would be available to pick up bags.

Mr. Fisher said he has something to do every day between those 2 dates and he would have to limit it to just one day of picking up people's trash. With the short notice there's no way we can get this going he said.

He said he hates to do that and he really liked having 2 cleanups a year but with shortage of members and those members that are on the board some decide they just don't want to show up and it's not politically correct but he is tired of it and disappointed. We need help Farmington and if you want to keep your Con Com we need help he said.

He then said that he was going to have to call off the fall cleanup this time.

6). New Business:

a). Wetlands Permit by Notification- Lancelot Shores Improvement Assoc. – Mr. Fisher said the people before the commission were here with a permit request to repair their docks and to apply more sand to several beaches.

David Scher told the members he has been involved in the application process with the NH Dept. of Environmental Services and they are required to obtain a signature from the local Con Com for repair/replacement of the boat launch and to replenish the beach sand. He said they are exempt from seeking permission for the sand work so it's really just for the boat launch.

Mr. Scher said the photos the commission received are recent photos he took to illustrate that along the way to the boat launch it's all cracked and needs to be repaved or repaired. He said at the end there is a drop off that broke off over time and this boat launch has been grandfathered in and is a legal boat launch that has been there for about 50 years. He said they are working within the existing footprint so they are seeking approval from the Con Com.

Ms. Bogardus asked where they will get their sand from.

Mr. Scher said they haven't looked into that yet and that their President knows more about the sand process.

Jim Melchionda said they have had a problem with a couple of the neighbors where they will purchase sand locally and find the quality of the sand unacceptable as a beach sand because it has too many pebbles in it. He said the suggestion is as a committee you should explore from a pit wherever you decide to buy the sand and visit it and make sure it's the quality of the sand that you want otherwise, you'll end up with stones in the sand which is unacceptable to people if they have to walk on it. He said they have used washed ocean beach sand previously and it has worked out pretty good.

Mr. Scher added that in the long term they intend to apply for a more extensive permit from NH DES to eventually purge their beaches which they have been informed is very beneficial to

the lake but that is a much longer application process. This permit that we're currently applying for is a permit by notification which is a simplified process from what I understand he said.

Ms. Bogardus asked if NH DES okayed the work on the boat launch.

Mr. Scher said before they submit the application to DES they have to get the Con Com's okay.

Mr. Melchionda said the boat ramp is only on 1 beach known as beach #2 and it's an asphalt driveway they covered about 15-18 years ago and it comes in from Camelot Shore Drive and extends down to the water's edge. He said the problem at the water's edge is the erosion and the movement of the ice at the water's edge.

He said there is also a problem with existing roots from some of the trees in the neighborhood that would erode under them. He said the objective of what they are trying to do is to fix the drop off of the asphalt roadway so that it doesn't drop 10"-12" into the existing shoreline which is the result of the erosion through the years and the asphalt coming up.

He asked if they were familiar with what the state did with the state boat ramp (off of Four Rod Road) and then explained what they did was different because they have a lot of money to do that and they put in a really nice ramp that doesn't move and the engineering part of it is magnificent but they don't have the money to do that.

Mr. Melchionda said he suggests to everybody that they drive over and use the ramp on Four Rod Road but some say they don't want to do that and the back lot owners can't put their boat in the water and it's unacceptable for them to go over to Four Rod Road every time they want to launch their boat. He said 60% of the property owners are back lot owners who don't have waterfront access except through that one beach.

Ms. Bogardus asked if they are going to redo it with asphalt all the way down to the water.

Mr. Melchionda said they probably will patch the end of it as the numbers they are looking at are in the neighborhood of \$7,000 to fix the drive into the lake. He said all they need is the end of it where it goes into the lake and it would be more prudent to spend their money when they look at purging the beaches. We need to find if we can financially a permanent solution to erosion on the lake because the elevations or depths of water are changing and reason they are changing is because of erosions and washouts into the lake so the more we try to control that the better the health of the lake is. From an economic standpoint it's beneficial to the state to fix up our waterways he said.

Mr. Scher said it's about what is best for the environment and for the association that has about 300 lot owners and it's one of the main things that people go there for.

Mr. Melchionda said they have not nailed down a financial solution for the driveway that is the boat ramp and it's predicated on what they have in the "kitty" to spend on that project. He said the application gives them a 5 year window to do the repairs and they will take a close look at what they need to do to make sure the solution is a 10 or 15 year solution so they don't have to keep on doing this.

Ms. Bogardus said this needs to be done although she wished it wasn't asphalt.

Mr. Fisher agreed it needs to be done and this was previously approved and grandfathered after being put in decades ago. He said it would be beneficial to the residents because if they had to go to the Four Rod Road boat ramp every time that place gets really crowded sometimes and it can get heated. I've also fallen on that ramp a few times as it gets slippery, he said.

Mr. Staples said it is already there and all they are doing is repairing it.

Motion: (Staples, second Bogardus) to allow Lancelot Shores to improve their boat launch and repair their beaches passed 3-0.

Chairman Fisher then signed the application forms.

Mr. Staples asked if they thought a concrete ramp would hold up better.

Mr. Melchionda explained the process for installing the state ramp and that it would be better but it would be a major challenge for them to do something similar with the funds they have. He said about 95% of their funds is geared to their roads and they don't receive any support from the Town so they have to do all of their own paving, road maintenance and plowing.

Ms. Bogardus asked if they intended to do the work this year.

Mr. Melchionda said they have a 5 year window and they would probably start next spring as they are currently involved with other projects.

b). Intent to Cut Wood or Timber – Tax Map M 24, Lot 1, Poor Farm Road, lot size: 27 acres, acreage to be cut: 27 acres, owner: Austin Tremblay, anticipated state date: August 20, 2021. Members questioned the "M" designation for the tax map.

c). Intent to Cut Wood or Timber – Tax Map R 11, Lot 2, Meaderboro Road, lot size: 27.41 acres, acreage to be cut: 6 acres, owner: Edward Burnap, anticipated state date: Nov. 1, 2021

d). FY22 NHACC Membership Dues- Mr. Fisher said he received a bill from the NH Assoc. of Conservation Commissions and the commission has been a member since way before he became a member. He said the membership dues are \$325 and asked for a motion to pay this invoice if they so choose to remain a member of NHACC.

Motion: (Bogardus, second Staples) to remain a member of the NHACC and to pay the invoice passed 3-0.

e). MMRG Donation Request- Mr. Fisher said Moose Mountain Regional Greenways is working with the Town of Milton to conserve over 200 acres of land in the Teneriffe Mountain Forest and they are asking for a donation to apply to this. He said normally he would say yes but with what they have in the works right now and he is not sure what it is going to cost and he is really not sure exactly how much money they have in their account.

He said they are in the process of accepting approx. 333 acres of land located between Bay Road and School Street for the Town of Farmington and that is going to cost us quite a bit.

Ms. Bogardus said that comes out of the conservation fund and this donation would come out of the operating budget. She asked if they provided a suggested donation amount.

Mr. Fisher said there is no suggested donation amount.

Ms. Bogardus said she would love to make a donation because MMRG does really good work

and they have gotten a lot of land conserved. She said she has no idea what a reasonable donation would be for this and asked if they give any dollar amounts at all for what they need for the overall project.

Mr. Fisher said there is nothing in the donation request letter.

Mr. Staples suggested postponing a decision until the next meeting so they can see what they have in the account.

Mr. Fisher said he could check the amount in the account and bring this up at the Nov. meeting because this project would not be completed by then. He said there is no completion date on the letter and he could call MMRG and see what the average donation is.

Ms. Bogardus said they haven't spent a lot of money this year and they are a really good organization.

Mr. Fisher said with what has been going on COVID that has cut into everything quite a bit and the town is beginning to wake up and our Rec. Dept. is doing wonderfully, the Farmington Town Players are putting on plays again and the Friends of Farmington are now having their projects again.

Consensus of the members was to postpone this until Nov. and Mr. Fisher will call MMRG and see what he can find out about it.

f). SELT Thank You Letter- Mr. Fisher said they received a letter from the Southeast Land Trust thanking them for their \$100 contribution and renewing their membership in SELT. He read that as a "SELTIE" they are helping save local landscapes for cleaner drinking water, working farms, thriving forests and wildlife and on behalf of all who love the unique heritage of our state we thank you sincerely.

g). Pike Industries Permit Application – Mr. Fisher said that last month he brought up that Pike Industries was going to be coming before them this month with a request for their excavation permits concerning some acreage located around the Cocheco River and back behind Pike Industries out towards the Huckin's property. He said Pike Industries has withdrawn their request and he did not know why and that he wanted the commission to be aware of it.

h). French and Dubois Properties Walkthroughs – Mr. Fisher said the walkthroughs were conducted and he was not going to read everything in land manager Barry Keith's report. He said the walkthroughs were conducted by NH Fish & Game's Conservation Land Steward for our area and everything is looking great and is on track. There was some minor garbage noted in a few locations and they heard someone cutting lumber and found it to be someone cutting on his property abutting the conservation land he said.

He said walks were done on both properties, the trails were looked at and everything was good, nothing out of the ordinary was noted, there is nothing to take care of and they will continue to monitor the properties as needed.

i). Con Com Members Contact Info- Mr. Fisher said they didn't have all of the members phone numbers and addresses on the contact list. He asked the members present and at home to

send him an e-mail with their home address and phone number on it that would only be used if he had to contact them (without using e-mails as that could be considered a meeting).

7). FYI:

Mr. Fisher said he wanted to let the members know that as the Chair of the Con Com he received a letter as an abutter to the horseshoe pits that are located on Hornetown Road. He said it was for a Zoning Board meeting where the applicant was asking for a waiver to have 2 principal uses on the property-one being a home they request to build on the portion of the lot that abuts the French conservation land and the other being the horseshoe pits that have been there for about 30 years.

He said they came before the board and presented their case and he identified to the applicant and the board members that he could be considered as a conflict of interest being an abutter as the Chair of the Con Com. He said the property owners said they had no problem with him sitting on the ZBA and judging their request and the other board members had no objection. He said he listened to what they wanted to do and in his opinion they have been very good neighbors to the conservation land and have kept the property line clean and have not encroached on the conservation area so after the discussion and reviewing their application it was approved and they received their variance.

8). Upcoming Dates:

a). Next Meeting – Wednesday, November 10, 2021 at 6 p.m.

9). Adjournment:

Motion: (Bogardus, second Staples) to adjourn the meeting passed 3-0 at 6:43 p.m.

Respectively submitted
Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary

William "Bill" Fisher, Chairman