

Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 12, 2022
Municipal Office Building-2nd Floor

Commission Members Present:

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

Commission Members Absent:

Randy Orvis, Vice Chairman, not excused
Richard Ballou, excused

Others Present:

Robert Stowell, Tri Tech Engineering
Dennis Allfrey, New Style Homes owner

1). Call to Order:

Chairman Fisher 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) Old Business:

a). Bylaws-Chairman Fisher said several months ago the commission voted to change their bylaws. He said he has since found out that they can't be changed without a vote by a warrant article at Town Meeting because the commission was established by a Town Meeting vote.

He said according to the RSA the commission must be comprised of seven members and there must be at least 4 members in attendance for a quorum of the members to conduct business.

Mr. Staples asked if they wanted him to talk to the Town Administrator about including a warrant article with the proposed changes on the March Town Meeting warrant.

Mr. Fisher said no and that he wanted them to stand as is and they need to get more members. Ms. Bogardus said they have one more person.

Mr. Fisher said they gained one more member and lost another one tonight. He said he would like to withdraw his previous motion to change the bylaws to have 3-4 members and a quorum of 3 members. He said that maybe once everything is done with COVID they may get some more volunteers and that Mr. Ballou will return from Florida soon.

Motion: (Fisher, second Staples) to withdraw the previous motion to change the bylaws passed 4-0.

Mr. Fisher then said the bylaws remain as they were.

b). Barry 4-H Camp Update- Mr. Fisher said he has not heard from anyone and he has not been able to contact the school with all the COVID issues. He said he would hate to try to send another person to camp and have it get canceled again and that he didn't have any faith in them right now but they could still try.

Ms. Bogardus said previously the application to attend camp had to be in by Dec. but they didn't need the name of the camper until Feb. and asked for the current submission deadline.

Mr. Fisher said he believes the deadline is in Feb.

Ms. Bogardus said she would like to try again but she didn't think was enough time to choose someone.

Mr. Fisher said with the COVID problems and the cancelation of meetings due to the lack of a quorum the commission has been unable to act upon sending a child to camp this year.

Hopefully we can get our clean-ups up and running again, that there will be a Hay Day and we can have our booth there again and get back into the normal swing of things he said.

He asked the members if they wanted to continue to try push it through for camper to attend camp this year.

Ms. Bogardus said they only have a month to get a name and if he contacts the school and they respond with a name she would be fine with him submitting that name to the camp.

Mr. Fisher said he will contact the school and see if he can get a name of an interested student.

5). New Business:

a). Review of Special Use Permit- Mr. Fisher said the commission has a special use permit for a subdivision going in off of Fox Trot Drive to review. He said the application has been before the Planning Board twice and is now coming to the Con Com for review of the potential impact to the wetlands in the area.

Tri Tech Engineering President Bob Stowell said earlier this year New Style Homes purchased a couple of properties on Fox Trot Drive which include a 1.5 acre lot in front and a 22 acre lot in the rear. He said they are proposing to get access to Fox Trot that comes through the lot out front and the right-of-way will lead to a 900 ft. cul-de-sac and he has detailed plans available if the commission has any specific questions about the project.

He said once they get the road into the rear lot they propose to create 6 building lots. He said they have been through the wetlands mapping process and have identified the locations of the wetlands boundaries. He said the green area on the map is not a lake or a standing water wetland and the biggest problem they have out there is that the land is flat so the water has to sit there a little longer than it does in other places.

Mr. Stowell said the soils are fairly good and there are 14 or 15 test pits throughout the property that are all within a 2.5 ft. range of the water table which means it is pretty suitable soil for a septic design. He said they have been to the Planning Board for a conceptual review twice to talk about how to go about this and the conversation focused on the location and configuration of the lots and with the guidance from the board they have gotten to where they

have made a formal application submission to the Planning Board, had a meeting with the Technical Review Committee yesterday and it was well received.

He said the Public Works Dept. was happy with the road design. We have open drainage that comes down the side of the road and this is outlined in the construction plans and the drainage report. The runoff from the road enters the 4 bay and settles out the larger material so by the time it goes into the bio-retention area it doesn't clog up the bio-retention media there he said. Mr. Stowell said there is a total of 2950 sq. ft. of wetlands impact which requires a NH Dept. of Environmental Services Wetlands Permit in addition to the Special Use Permit and they wanted to get the commission's feedback before filing for the permits. He said they will get notice of the filing from DES and they will be asked for their input on that which is the same thing they presented tonight but from a different angle.

Ms. Bogardus asked if that would include their reports on any endangered species in the area. It looks like a very small area will be impacted she said.

Mr. Stowell it is and they have done all the paperwork to give to the state.

Mr. Allfrey said they did a functions and values assessment of the wetlands and asked if the commission received a copy of the assessment.

Mr. Fisher said they received copies of the assessment from the Planning Director.

Mr. Stowell said they have a total of 23.5 acres and it is one acre (lot size) and 40,000 sq. ft. (contiguous buildable area) zoning out there and they will have 6 well placed lots with very nice buildings. He said it looks better out there than it does on paper and the green areas (wetlands) are not the dominant feature that it looks like on paper.

Ms. Bogardus asked if there are any vernal pools (seasonal pools of water that provide habitat for plants and animals) there.

Mr. Stowell said no and the soil scientist went through the whole process and there are no poorly drained soils, vernal pools, it's a fully drained forested wetland with no stream crossing.

Mr. Staples pointed to one of the lots on the plan asked if it would be a building lot.

Mr. Allfrey said the 15 acre piece would be one big lot and pointed out the proposed setbacks, wetland buffer areas and the building site.

Mr. Fisher said he is also the Planning Board Rep. and he was concerned about what to do about runoff but he could see they have taken care of that with the 2 runoff areas with the bio-retention areas to get the water back into the water shed area without harmful effects. I'm always worried when you build houses up here the water is going to flood out a road down there and your plans take care of that he said.

He said the wetlands they would be impacting are a very small area and there's really not that much impact. It's a soft marshy area at certain times of the year when the snow melts or when there is excess rain and you're putting in a culvert so it drains real good and a land bridge and it will be fine he said.

Ms. Bogardus asked about the 50 ft. buffer and if they wouldn't be able to build beyond that.

Mr. Stowell said without coming back to commission again the 50' buffer is not to be disturbed.

Ms. Bogardus said all of this is pretty dry land where the building areas are.

Mr. Stowell said yes and it's very nice out there.

Mr. Fisher asked if there was anything the members would like him to note in a letter to the Planning Board. He said this is the initial stages and once it goes through them they can apply for the permits which will get oversight by the state, the Planning Board will see it again to make sure that everything is done which will be put into a letter of approval to the DES.

He said the Planning Board will track all this and all they are looking for is if the Con Com has any comments such as when they start to disturb the wetlands are they going to put in any filtration to prevent any silt from draining into the wetlands. Looking at the reports I can say the answer to that is yes and the filtration and the retention pond area are in place to take care of any runoff in the future to make sure that it is filtered before entering the bio-area and wetland areas. Any sediment will be filtered out using natural processes through the woods, rocks, sand and gravel as it has been for hundreds of thousands of years he said.

Chairman Fisher then asked the members if they had any concerns about the proposed plan.

Ms. Bogardus said she would be interested to see what DES has to say and if anything is endangered that is important to her and she knows DES does that study.

Mr. Fisher said there is little land disturbance other than the foundations, the wells and the septic systems. There's really not much change and I think it will be a beautiful subdivision back there very peaceful and very quiet he said.

Mr. Staples said when he read the e-mail from the Planning Director he wasn't impressed and was totally against this. He said when he printed out the information and looked at it, it was nothing that the e-mail said.

Mr. Fisher said if there were no comments or concerns from the members he would send a letter to the Planning Board.

Mr. Staples asked if they needed to make a motion to do that and if so he would abstain from the vote having formerly worked for New Style Homes.

Mr. Fisher said he thought a consensus of the members would be acceptable as they are purely advisory on this and are not authorized to approve it.

Consensus of the members was to have Chairman Fisher forward a letter to the Planning Board stating that they have no comments and they believe everything is satisfactory and all plans are in place to ensure the preservation of the wetland areas.

b). Notices of Intent to Cut- Tax Map R04, Lot 13, access road-Places Crossing Lane, lot size-48 acres, 45 acres to be cut, owner- AJ Cameron Sod Farms, Inc., application date-Dec. 16,2021. Tax Map R04, Lot 11, access road-Places Crossing Lane, lot size-10.8 acres, 9 acres to be cut, owner- Alfred Cameron Revocable Land Trust.

c). Rec. Dept. Plans – Mr. Staples said he received a message from Rec. Dept. Director Erica Rogers saying she has some big plans she would like to work on with the Con Com and asking if

he had time to meet with her to discuss those plans. He said hopefully by their next meeting he will know what Mrs. Rogers has planned.

Mr. Fisher said Mrs. Rogers can contact him directly as he has more time available than Mr. Staples who works a full time job.

Mr. Staples said he hoped that whatever she has planned it will draw more attention to the Con Com and try to rally some more members.

Mr. Fisher said when spring gets here and things get better with COVID they can start having discussions about programs and get out to clean up the trails and get the town clean-ups going again. He said he has to prepare a report for the Annual Town Report on what they did last year and the biggest thing they did was their one and only clean-up which got about 2 tons of garbage off the streets and people worked very hard to get that done.

d). New Member – Mr. Fisher said Blanche Tanner is a new member of the Con Com but she is also a member of the Budget Committee (that was meeting at the same time downstairs). He said they still need 2 more regular members so they will have a full Conservation Commission and do more for the town. Most months it only takes a couple of hours of your time to come to the meeting and once we get back into full swing it will take a little more of your time because we need people to set up discussions, programs, Hay Day tables and those months may take 10 or 12 hours of your time. The town needs your help, the Con Com needs your help and we have a good time he said.

He said if someone is interested in the Con Com or wants to know more about it to give him a call at 603-834-8806 or e-mail him at billfisher@metrocast.net

6). Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 6 p.m.

7). Adjournment:

Motion: (Bogardus, second Fitzgerald) to adjourn the meeting passed 4-0 at 6:33 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

William "Bill" Fisher, Chairman