

Town of Farmington  
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, June 13, 2018

**Commission Members Present:** Chairman Laura Bogardus, Vice Chairman Randy Orvis, Secretary Patience Taylor, Selectmen's Rep. Dave Connolly, Richard Ballou, Michelle Elbert, Bill Fisher, and Tom Sorensen

**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:**

**May 9, 2018-** Page 2, French Property Walk, 4<sup>th</sup> line- add "were" after "there"

**Motion:** (Connolly, second Fisher) to accept the minutes as amended passed 5-0-3 (Orvis, Ballou, Sorensen abstained).

**5). McCarthy Trail:**

**A). Dedication-** Mr. Connolly said the dedication for the (Gerry) McCarthy trail was held the previous Sunday at the Public Safety Building with about a dozen attendees. He thanked everyone involved from Police Chief Jay Drury who suggested that a trail be established there, Jim Horgan for assisting with the mapping and roughing out the trail, the members of the Con Com for cleaning and fine tuning the trail, Mr. Fisher for constructing the bench and trail signs, to Winnisquam Wood Products and Charlie King for donating materials. He said the dedication lasted about 15 minutes and then everyone walked the trail. He then encouraged the public to make use of the trail.

Mr. Orvis asked if the trail comes out near the 500 Boys and Girls Club property.

Mr. Connolly said the trail does not currently reach the club property and is something that will need to be discussed because of wetlands, accessibility and private property issues. He suggested that the Chair include the matter as a topic of discussion for a future meeting.

Mr. Fisher said he heard there is also a cemetery located out behind the trail and suggested they may want to add trail markers and a short trail to the cemetery.

Mr. Connolly said the land is Town property but it does not have a conservation easement so any other additions or changes to the site would need approval from the Board of Selectmen. Additional discussion included possible future plans for the property such as an amphitheater, "Farmington Central Park", and the total number of wetland and usable acres in the parcel.

**B). Pump House Update-** Mr. Sorensen said the art teacher that was involved with the mural

project is now out on maternity leave and can't continue with the project this year. He estimated the cost for the materials needed which include plywood, hardware, wood for a custom door, pressure treated lumber to build out the existing windows, Kilz and polyurethane would total \$499 and the artist paint would cost about \$200.

Mr. Connolly asked if the work on the door and windows could be completed this summer.

Mr. Sorensen said that portion of the project could be completed now and suggested they also be painted to protect the wood from rotting. He said he contacted several of the area retailers and has not yet received any replies.

Mr. Connolly asked for the estimated cost of the plywood for the window frames and a door.

Mr. Sorensen said the lumber and the Kilz would cost about \$450.

**Motion:** (Connolly, second Elbert) to spend up to \$500 to purchase the lumber and materials to move forward with the construction of the door and window frames passed unanimously.

#### **6). Quote for French Lot Wildlife Area:**

Chairman Bogardus said this item was tabled at the last meeting because the members were unsure as to the scope of the work planned. She said following the meeting she spoke with property manager Barry Keith who said the area to be mowed at the French lot would include the core of the central area of the lot with the Aspen regeneration areas around the core to remain untouched. Mr. Keith said that he would mark the areas to be mowed which would be conducted after July 1 at a cost of \$300 she said.

**Motion:** (Fisher, second Orvis) to spend \$300 for mowing at the French property passed 8-0.

#### **7). Old Business:**

**A). French Property Bridges Fixed-** Ms. Bogardus said that the bridges on the French property have been fixed and the Dubois and Town Forest log landings have been limed and fertilized by Steve Yurick.

Mr. Connolly said Mr. Yurick spoke to him about not receiving payment for his work from the Town. He said that he explained that his invoice has been submitted to the Finance Dept. and assured him he will receive payment.

Ms. Bogardus said she would check on the status of Mr. Yurick's payment.

**B). Hills Property-** Mr. Orvis asked for an update on the status of the Hills property easement.

Mr. Connolly said the final draft of the easement is in the attorney's hands. He said at a previous Selectmen's meeting he asked the board to authorize the Selectmen Chairman to sign the easement documents once they are finalized, to authorize the Con Com Chair to sign the baseline documentation once completed and informed the board that they are expecting to close on the easement within the next few months.

**C). NHACC Forum-** Chairman Bogardus said that about 15 people attended the forum entitled "Why do we need Conservation Commissions?" held at the Goodwin Library. She said the guest speaker Barbara Richter spoke about the Natural Resources Inventory and asked about the

status of the inventory in Farmington.

Mr. Orvis said the Town has done 2 or 3 natural inventories as it is part of the Master Plan but it has probably been about 10 years since it was updated.

Mr. Connolly suggested Ms. Bogardus contact the Town Planner for more information about the Natural Resources Inventory.

Mr. Orvis said most of the town's resources have already been inventoried and it would be a matter of updating the inventory to include any items that were lost, discovered or gained since the inventory was last conducted.

Chairman Bogardus thanked Mr. Connolly for attending the forum and supplying additional information to the audience.

Mr. Fisher thanked the Goodwin Library for letting the commission use the space for the forum. Members suggested the following topics for possible future forums: best management practices for sedimentation and erosion control, selective tree cutting and timber harvesting.

**D). Blue Job Mountain Signage-** Ms. Bogardus said she spoke with NH State Parks Volunteer Program Manager Patrick Hummel about the trails at Blue Job Mountain. She said she stressed that the commission's main concern was the people getting lost while hiking and asked him to try to get the blazing (trail marking) completed this year. Mr. Hummel said they expect to complete the trail blazing by the end of next summer due to the number of areas that look like trails that are not actual trails on Little Blue Job and that they would like to get everything clearly mapped out before blazing the trails she said.

Mrs. Elbert said the trail from Little Blue Job to Blue Job is not very evident.

Ms. Bogardus said that is part of the problem with many of the trails there and it is easy for hikers to get turned around. She added that someone from the state is also trying to form a trails maintenance group and asked Mrs. Elbert if she would be interested in heading up the formation of a local trails maintenance group.

Mrs. Elbert said she would be interested in forming such a group but didn't know how to begin. Discussion included posting a notice on Face book and developing a brochure to place at the trail head and other locations with contact information for interested volunteers, possibly expanding the group's scope to include maintenance of the trails in town and providing training for the group in proper trail marking and maintenance.

Chairman Bogardus said that the state is re-routing one of the trails on the Strafford side of Little Blue Job because someone is building a new home near the trail head and it may be one of the reasons for the delay in completing the mapping work.

Mr. Connolly suggested Chairman Bogardus maintain periodic contact with the state dept. to keep the issue on the forefront of their agenda.

## **8). New Business:**

**A). PLAN NH Steering Committee Update-** Mr. Fisher reported the committee held a meeting on May 30. He said the members have been conducting interviews around town asking people

what they would like to see for the future of the downtown area including what they like and don't like about the area now, what the downtown needs and how to go about revitalizing the area. He said the committee decided to increase the number of interviewees and to widen the scope of the interviews to include more residents from outside of the downtown area. All of the information collected will be sent the UNH Cooperative Extension to be compiled into a report about the redevelopment of the Village Center and the old fire house lot. He said the next meeting is scheduled for June 27 on the second floor of the Municipal Office Building at 6 p.m. and encouraged the public to attend.

Ms. Taylor asked Mr. Fisher to tell the commission about some of the ideas the committee has received so far.

Mr. Fisher said he did not want to discuss the responses at this point as they do not want to influence the responses of those who have not yet been interviewed.

**B). Hay Day Application-** Chairman Bogardus said she received an application for the commission to rent space at the annual Hay Day which is scheduled for Saturday, August 18. This year's theme will be "game shows" she said.

Mr. Connolly asked if the commission wants to participate in the event this year in the same capacity as they have in the past. He said that previously the commission has rented 4 or 5 spaces and invited other groups or organizations to join with the commission for display space. He said those groups have included Moose Mountains Regional Greenways (MMRG), Southeast Land Trust (SELT), Seacoast Eat Local, NH Assoc. of Conservation Commissions (NHACC), York Wildlife Center and UNH Cooperative Extension. He said that setting up for the event is a lot of work and questioned the return the commission is getting for their time and efforts. He added that he was not necessarily suggesting they not participate at all but that they may want to consider downsizing their participation for this year.

Mr. Ballou said the return they get is immeasurable from people stopping to ask questions and in the visibility for the commission.

Mr. Connolly said he noticed that in the last 5 years the both the attendance and the number of people who have stopped to ask questions is down.

Mr. Ballou asked if that has anything to do with the location of the commission's booth.

Mr. Connolly said he did not think it had anything to do with their booth location.

He said that in the past the commission has requested to rent 3 spaces and usually ends up with 4 spaces. Rental cost for the 3 spaces was \$75 and was included as a line item in the commission's budget each year he said.

Discussion included potential sources for tables and canopies, special guests must supply their own canopies and display materials and when to begin inviting possible special guests for this year's event.

Mr. Connolly said that in the past the commission received booth space for free on Main Street. He said he asked for a space on Central Street which has better visibility and they have had to

pay for the spaces since then because they are taking up a prime location that could be rented out to someone else.

Chairman Bogardus said she would confirm the rental charge with the Recreation Dept. and begin lining up the special guests. She asked the members for their thoughts on whom to invite. Members' suggestions included Seacoast Eat Local SAM Van, UNH Cooperative Extension, NH Trails Bureau, NH Fish and Game fur kit, MMRG and potential new participants/display items such as the Beekeepers' Association, a Master Gardener, a "shame board" that includes photos from littered sites and a Power Point presentation on recycling.

**Motion:** (Fisher, second Ballou) to expend up to \$75 to reserve three spaces at Hay Day passed 8-0.

**Motion:** (Ballou, second ) to take a 5 minute break. The motion failed due to lack of a second.

**C). Local River Advisory Committee-** Chairman Bogardus said the NH Dept. of Environmental Services (NH DES) is seeking three volunteers to represent Farmington on the Cocheco River Local Advisory Committee.

Mr. Connolly said at the last meeting Selectmen accepted an application from a resident to become a member of the new committee. He said the applicant previously worked for NH Fish and Game and currently works for NH DES and is also knowledgeable in grant writing.

Mr. Fisher said the Planning Board received the same letter and that the Town Planner is looking into the requirements and duties of the committee.

**D). Scavenger Hunt-** Chairman Bogardus said the Goodwin Library plans to hold a scavenger hunt at the McCarthy Trail on July 13.

Mr. Fisher asked who would be responsible for liability insurance coverage in the event that someone was injured during the hunt.

Mr. Connolly said the event should be covered by the library's insurance as the event is being sponsored by them.

Mr. Fisher suggested that the Library Trustees discuss the matter before the plans are finalized.

Mrs. Elbert (current Trustees Chairman) said a Trustees' meeting is scheduled for next week.

Mr. Orvis said there is a state trail system insurance policy that covers any trail activities and asked how to get the McCarthy Trail included in the policy.

Mr. Connolly then read from Title LII, Section 508:14 of NH state law that says that any landowner or lessee including state or municipally owned lands, who permit without charge persons to use lands for recreational purposes or as a spectator of recreational activity shall not be held liable for personal injury or property damage in the absence of intentionally caused injury or damage. He said someone would need to ask the state if there is an actual insurance policy to cover liability for these situations.

Mr. Fisher then asked why the state is going after people who don't have a Hike NH card.

Mr. Orvis explained that is a separate issue and that the state is going after people who are irresponsible when hiking and charging them for the cost of search and rescue missions.

Mr. Fisher said he wanted to make sure the Town and the Library are covered for liability and that he was unsure if the library's policy covers offsite events and activities.

Mrs. Elbert said she would contact Library Director Tami LaRock and ask her to obtain coverage information from the library's insurance agent for the Trustee's meeting.

Chairman Bogardus said the hunt would involve answering general questions about the trail site and kids who complete the hunt will be entered into a raffle for tickets to the Squam Lake Science Center. There is no rain date for the hunt and in the event of rain that day participants will be given the list of questions to be completed on their own for entry into the raffle she said.

**E). MMRG Donor Appreciation-** Moose Mountains Regional Greenways will hold a Donor Appreciation event on June 27 from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Leary property in Farmington. The event is for donors who contributed to the Leary property, Widow Maker Farm and the Thompson property conservation easements and the rain date is the following day. The menu includes light fare, beverages and dessert and a hike of the property is planned.

**9). FYI:**

Intents to Cut – Map R10, Lot 01; Louis Gregoire owner, cutting 50 acres.

Map R62, Lot 07; Robert Hayes owner, Curtis Road, cutting 185 acres.

**10). July Dates:**

Wednesday, July 11, 2018- Con Com July monthly meeting

Friday, July 13, 2018- McCarthy Trail Scavenger Hunt

**11). Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (Orvis, second Ballou) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 7:35 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

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Laura Bogardus, Chairman