

Town of Farmington  
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, March 16, 2022  
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH

**Commission Members Present:**

Bill Fisher, Chairman  
Richard Ballou  
Blanche Tanner  
Laura Bogardus  
Gerry Vachon, Selectmen's Rep

**Commission Members Absent:**

Larry Fitzgerald, excused

**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). Welcome New/Returning Members:**

Mr. Fisher welcomed Mr. Vachon as the new Selectmen's Rep to the Con Com. He said their previous Selectmen's Rep Doug Staples has taken a position with the Budget Committee and wished him luck with that.

Ms. Bogardus asked if Mr. Staples was still going to help with the spring cleanup.

Mr. Fisher said Mr. Staples said he is still going to help them out.

Mr. Vachon said Mr. Staples asked about attending Con Com events and participating in the cleanups, etc. and was told as there would be no decision making on his part there wouldn't be 2 Selectmen on the commission and he could still participate.

Mr. Fisher then said Ms. Tanner was reappointed last night by the Selectmen and welcomed her back to the Con Com and they are glad to have her.

**4). Commission Reorganization:**

Mr. Fisher said the Con Com bylaws state that at the first Con Com meeting following the Annual Town Meeting they need to elect a new Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary. He said Ms. Bogardus will be leaving the commission and this is her last night as a member. He said he received her resignation, regrettably, as she is moving to Farmington, Maine. I wish you the best of luck and you and Tom (Sorensen) been so much help through the years and I don't know how we will get along without you he said.

Ms. Bogardus said they had a nice time and enjoyed being members of the commission.

Mr. Fisher added that most of all he will hate to see her dog Bella go and asked for visitation rights to see her. He said there are 3 positions to fill and 3 members present that are eligible to

hold those positions as Mr. Vachon is not eligible because the Selectmen's Rep is not allowed to fill any of the positions. He then asked for nominations for Chairman.

**Motion:** (Vachon, second Bogardus) to nominate Bill Fisher for Chairman;

There were no other nominations for Chairman.

Mr. Fisher accepted the nomination.

**Vote:** The motion passed 5-0.

Chairman Fisher then asked for nominations for Vice Chairman.

**Motion:** (Fisher, second Tanner) to nominate Richard Ballou for Vice Chairman;

Mr. Ballou accepted the nomination.

There were no other nominations for Vice Chairman.

**Vote:** The motion passed 5-0.

Chairman Fisher asked for nominations for Secretary.

**Motion:** (Bogardus, second Fisher) to nominate Blanche Tanner for Secretary.

Ms. Tanner accepted the nomination.

There were no other nominations for Secretary.

**Vote:** The motion passed 4-0-1 (Tanner abstained).

Mr. Fisher said they need help on the Con Com and there 2 vacant primary member seats on the commission and all of their alternate member seats are empty. He said they have a lot of fun and do a lot of work that is good for the town. He said they have a lot of trails to maintain and they may be getting some more and asked anyone who has anywhere from 2 hours to maybe 10 hours a month to spare to please come and help the commission.

## **5). Public Comments:**

**Upcoming Rec. Dept. Events**-Ms. Tanner said on Saturday, April 2 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. there will be a Winter Carnival which will be held indoors at the Rec. Center and they are looking for volunteers to help out. She said to visit the Town website or call the Rec. Dept. at 755-2405 for more information.

She said also on April 2 the Rec. Dept. will start selling the ducks for the Duck Race to be held on May 7.

Mr. Fisher asked for the race route.

Ms. Tanner said they will start out behind Mill's Market and float down the river to finish line near the Main St. Bridge. She said the price for a duck has not been decided yet.

She said a lot of activities are planned for this spring and summer and a lot of volunteers will be needed especially when we get to Hay Day. If there is anybody out there that would like to volunteer please call the Rec. Dept. and get your name on a list because we're going to need a lot of help she said.

## **6). Review of Minutes:**

**February 9, 2022**- No errors or omissions

**Motion:** (Bogardus, second Ballou) to accept the Feb. 9, 2022 minutes as written passed 4-0-1 (Vachon abstained).

Mr. Fisher said the 01/12/22 meeting minutes were approved last month and then signed the minutes. He said on Nov. 10, 2021 and Dec. 8, 2021 there were not enough members present to have a quorum so they didn't really have a meeting and signed the minutes noting the meetings were canceled due to a lack of a quorum of the members.

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

**a). Town Clean-up April 23, 2022-** Chairman Fisher said this is the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month and asked if this is still a good date for the members.

Ms. Tanner asked for the timeframe for the cleanup.

Mr. Fisher said they normally meet at the Municipal Office Building around 8 a.m. and he will have the trash bags, vests and gloves, the volunteers will sign up, grab some bags and the other items as needed and then go clean up their own areas. He said if the group has no preference they may choose a road to go clean up and depending on the number of volunteers they usually clean up 2 or 3 roads.

He said last year about a dozen roads were cleaned up and each person did their own roads. Then they called/texted him and he went to the site with his trailer and picked up the bags, the vests and the gloves and then took the trash to the Transfer Station. He said he thought it worked out well last year and they picked up almost 4,000 lbs. of trash including about 40 truck, tractor and car tires and that they would do it the same way this year and let people choose their own areas to clean up.

He said if there were no objections he would plan for this year's cleanup to take place on April 23 and that he is looking for someone to help with the art work for the posters to publicize the event.

Mr. Vachon asked if they get the bags for this from NH the Beautiful.

Mr. Fisher said yes and that they still have some bags left from last year. He said he planned to contact them to request more bags and then pick them up when they start handing them out in April. He said he thought they have enough bags on hand for this cleanup but if necessary he could pick up some bags at Wal Mart.

He said the cleanup needs to be done no later than 2:30 p.m. to give them enough time to pick up the last of the trash and get it to the Transfer Station before they close at 3:30 p.m. He added that if the cleanup was canceled he would post it online but he didn't expect it to be canceled unless there is heavy rain that day.

Ms. Tanner said she should be available most of that day but there is an activity potentially planned for that day at the Rec. Center that she may need to help with. She said she walks around town picking up trash all the time anyway and she can still do that and then asked for more bags for those walks.

Mr. Fisher said he would give her more bags after the meeting.

Ms. Bogardus said one of the nice things about the way they are doing this is you don't have to be there for the whole day. You do it when you can and when you feel like quitting you let him (Mr. Fisher) where the bags are she said.

Mr. Vachon said he may or may not be there because they have travel baseball starting on the first weekend in April and they don't have the schedule for the games yet. He said if they can be there he will "drag" his son along with him too.

Mr. Fisher said years ago they also had a cleanup for the Cocheco River and people went out in their kayaks and picked up stuff and maybe someday they can get that started up again.

**b). Any Other Old Business**-none

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

**a). Abutter Notice:** Mr. Fisher said they received an abutter notice for Tax Map R-61, Lots 10 and 19-1, Foxtrot Drive, Rural Residential Zone. He said the Planning Board saw this case last night and he explained that the Con Com saw this last month concerning the wetlands and the Special Use Permit for the proposed road that would cross wetland areas and the mitigation steps they were taking to prevent damage and the restoration after the construction.

He said he told the Planning Board the Con Com had no comments and agreed to their terms and recommended the approval of the Special Use Permit. The Planning Board heard the case and then continued the hearing until April 20 he said.

He said the proposal is to create 6 new lots on a new road behind Fox Trot Drive and to put in 6 houses out there. There were some concerns about potential contamination of abutters' wells, noise and damage to Fox Trot Drive from heavy machinery and it was recommended that a third party review the plans for the road and the drainage and make sure it doesn't affect the wetland areas or the people surrounding it he said.

**b). Blue Job Mountain Trail Clean-up Day**-Mr. Fisher said the trail cleanup by the NH Division of Forests and Lands is scheduled for Saturday, April 30, 2022. Participants will meet at the Blue Job Mountain Crown Point parking lot in Strafford, NH at 8:30 a.m. and are asked to bring work gloves, lunch and water and to wear closed toe shoes. Tools, snacks, beverages and giveaways will be provided. You can register online at [volunteer@dn-cr.nh.gov](mailto:volunteer@dn-cr.nh.gov) he said.

Mr. Ballou said he planned to attend the cleanup day.

Mr. Fisher asked the viewers if they could spare some time to go out and help this group and it will be greatly appreciated. It's a wonderful organization and the Con Com has been supporting them for a number of years and they do a great job and would appreciate your help he said.

**c). Nature Groupie Volunteer Events**- Mr. Fisher said he received an e-mail from the group last week and there are a lot of things going on in different towns in ME and NH through June 10 including a "Gardening for Pollinator's" training webinar online or in Brentwood, NH and a webinar on "Saving for Special Purposes". For more information Google "Nature Groupie NH" and it will take you to their website he said.

**d). Any Other New Business**- Ms. Tanner said the Rec. Dept. would like to help with any plans

for cleaning up the Bay Road trail.

Mr. Fisher said they try to take care of the parking lot and there are no specific marked trails there yet.

Ms. Bogardus asked if they were talking about trash cleanup or trail maintenance.

Ms. Tanner said they were talking about trail maintenance.

Mr. Fisher said all of the trails could use some work and he heard there are some trees down out at the French property conservation area. He said he was not sure if it has been cleaned up as he hasn't been able to go and walk the trails due to some recent surgery.

He said they need a lot of trail maintenance and after this winter the McCarthy Trail is also going to need some cleanup.

Ms. Tanner asked for the number of official trails the town has.

Mr. Fisher said the trail on the French property on Hornetown Road and McCarthy Trail at the Public Safety Building are officially marked trails and there are some other trails made by people walking there but they are not officially marked by the Con Com.

Ms. Tanner asked if people want to help clean up the trails how they would go about that.

Mr. Fisher said they can contact him at 603-834-8806 and maybe they can get together and have maintenance days for the trails.

Ms. Tanner asked if there are other organizations or groups in town that would partner with the Con Com.

Mr. Fisher said they never had any business or group say they wanted to get together and do a trail maintenance day.

Ms. Bogardus said the Con Com has never asked anybody and that might be a good idea.

Mr. Fisher said the one partnership they tried with a big box store fell through miserably and the Boy Scouts did help out with a cleanup one year. He said one of the problems with that is if it's an outside organization and they get hurt they are not sure if the Town's insurance would cover it.

Ms. Bogardus said when she was organizing the trail maintenance she got permission and it was fine because they weren't using heavy equipment.

Mr. Fisher said if the Con Com partnered with another group and went out with them the Town's insurance may cover them. He said he would ask the Town Administrator if Primex would cover it if they partnered with another group for trail maintenance.

Mr. Vachon said Somersworth has a waiver that all volunteers have to sign which has been cleared by Primex so the Town cannot be held responsible.

Mr. Fisher said he would ask the Town Administrator if Farmington has such a waiver.

Ms. Tanner asked if a commission member would have to sign the waiver.

Mr. Fisher said he didn't think so because being a volunteer for the Con Com they would be covered.

Mr. Vachon said it's almost like you are a Town employee (but you don't get paid) because you

are on the board and performing a task for the Town. He then suggested they check with Serve with Liberty (Mutual Ins.) for volunteers and each year he gets about 20 people to come in and rake the cemetery. He said they could apply to have their employees to come out and perform small tasks and that a Town employee or board member who is allowed to operate a chain saw could do cutting work and the volunteers could move items off of the trail.

Mr. Fisher said that may be something to look into for May.

Mr. Vachon said the Serve with Liberty program runs the weeks of May 2 and May 9. He said there is a list of projects their employees can sign up for such as cleaning a trail, painting fences or building picnic tables, etc. for towns while getting paid by the company.

Mr. Fisher said he would contact them and see if they can set up something during those 2 weeks in May. He said the McCarthy Trail is an easy one to clean up and maybe they can get the Boy Scouts to help them with that.

He returned Ms. Tanner's question about cleaning up the Bay Road trail and said he would like to set that up if they can get the volunteers to do it and he would revisit it again next month.

Ms. Tanner said the Budget Committee is meeting next week (March 23) and she would making an announcement about the Rec. Dept. activities at that meeting and asked if the commission minded if she also announced the Con Com is looking for volunteers to help with trail cleanup and that anyone interested should contact Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Fisher said that would be great and they need about a dozen people to clean up the trails.

Ms. Tanner asked about the group that puts the Christmas lights up downtown.

Ms. Bogardus said Farmington Preservation & Improvement Organization Board member Karen Warburton is "awesome" and she has come out for previous cleanups. She asked if they have heard from forester Barry Keith about doing the cutting in the woodcock areas.

Mr. Fisher said he has not heard from Mr. Keith about anything at all and they have not received any bills from him. He said he used to go out once a year and do a monitoring walk of the conservation properties.

Ms. Bogardus advised him to contact Mr. Keith to find out if his contract is up or they may have to find another forester to manage the properties. She said the woodcock area and the landing at the Dubois property need to be mowed and it is really weird not to have heard from him.

**Storybook Trail**-Mr. Fisher said he received an e-mail from Goodwin Library Children's Services Supervisor Kayla Morin-Riordan regarding the Storybook Trail at the McCarthy Trail. He said Mrs. Morin-Riordan would like to know if people from the Con Com would be willing to help build some display stands to be installed along the trail. He said he responded that he is a limited in what he can do right now but he would be glad to do it when he can. If they supply the materials I'd be glad to do the cutting and the assembly he said.

Ms. Bogardus said that is something else they can ask for volunteers for.

Mr. Fisher said they could do that but he does not have any specific plans for what they want build and how they want them built and they would need to get the materials to his house.

Mr. Vachon said he lives nearby and offered to help Mr. Fisher with the construction of the display stands.

Mr. Fisher thanked Ms. Bogardus again for the work she has done over years and said that she is going to be missed.

**7). Upcoming Dates:**

**a). Next Meeting:** April 13, 2022 in Municipal Office Building at 6 p.m.

**8). Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (Ballou, second Vachon) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 6:50 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording secretary

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William "Bill" Fisher, Chairman