

Town of Farmington  
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, May 11, 2022  
Selectmen's Chambers  
356 Main Street

**Commission Members Present:**

Bill Fisher, Chairman  
Richard Ballou, Vice chairman  
Blanche Tanner, Secretary  
Gerry Vachon, Selectmen's Rep

**Commission Members Absent:**

Larry Fitzgerald, excused

**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). Review of Minutes:**

April 13, 2022- No errors or omissions

**Motion:** (Vachon, second Tanner) to accept the minutes as written passed 4-0.

**5). Old Business:**

a). Town Cleanup- Mr. Fisher said the town cleanup was held on April 23 and they collected 780 lbs. of trash with about 21 volunteers. He said the next day another family went out along Cocheco Road and picked up another 220 lbs. so that is almost 1,000 lbs. of trash picked up. He said he would like to do another cleanup towards the end of summer if there are enough volunteers then.

b). Bay Rd.-Spring St. Land Donation Update-Mr. Fisher said he had a meeting about 2 weeks ago with the family donating the property to Farmington, Southeast Land Trust Executive Director Brian Hart, Planning Director Kyle Pimental and Assessing Clerk Kelly Heon and they discussed what the family would like to see done with this property and if SELT would like to partner with us to develop the property.

He said there are 3 pieces of property, one along Bay Rd. which starts at the Town Forest and comes down to about ¼ of a mile before the Y in the road. He said the other 2 pieces cover quite a chunk of land on Spring St and all together it is a little over 360 acres of land that will be used for hiking trails and family activities.

Mr. Fisher said they are still in discussions with SELT to see if they would like to partner with us and there are 3 ways they could go with this: 1). SELT owns the land and the Town of

Farmington owns the conservation easement and SELT would be responsible for putting in the trails, parking lots and anything associated with it and the Town would control what is going on with the land;

2). Farmington could own the land and SELT could own the easement and Farmington would have to put in the trails, parking, etc. and SELT would control it; SELT is not sure they can get to this because they have 2 other large projects going on and if they did take this it could be years down the road before anything would happen.

3). Farmington owns the land and the easement and has complete control over the 367 acres. Mr. Fisher said his choice would be option #3. He said the family wants to donate the land to Farmington as that was Mr. Cartwright's wishes before he passed away and the family wants it used for hiking trails and family activities such as picnics.

He said this would take a lot of the Cocheco River into account and across from Waldron's Grant there is pond/marsh area that he would like to see become a handicapped fishing area that is accessible to wheelchairs, etc. He said he would like the state to start stocking it with fish again and he heard at Monday night's Selectmen's meeting that the state still stocks that area. He said he would also like to see picnic tables and bicycle trails go in out there and he is not sure if SELT owned the easement if they would allow bicycle trails to be out there.

He said he also sees having 2 parking lots-one off of Bay Rd. and one off of Spring St. so people could get to both sides of it without having to cross over the Cocheco River. Putting a bridge over the river is one of the possible plans for the future he said.

Chairman Fisher then asked the members how they felt about it and which of the land owner/easement owner options they would choose.

Mr. Ballou said the third plan sounds good because SELT is spread out all over the place and has 2 big projects going on and is probably not going to be able to do very much with this. He said they are a great organization and they own properties all over the place.

Mr. Fisher agreed but he thought that it goes along more with the family's desire that Farmington owns the land and the easement. He said this is quite a gift and 360+ acres is a lot of land. I see in the future that this could be a draw from the surrounding area and people would come from other towns to hike our trails and stop at our stores and restaurants and maybe even some new businesses that cater to that type of activity would come in he said.

Ms. Tanner said she thought it is a good idea for the Town to own it but asked who is going to do all the work to clean that up, if will require fund raising to get picnic tables and get the trails in and how that would work.

Mr. Ballou asked if we get any money from the moose license plates.

Mr. Fisher said when people have property they want to pay less taxes on they put it into Current Use and when they take it out of Current Use they have to pay all the back taxes and 100% of that money goes into an account for the Con Com. He said right now there is approx. \$80,000 in that account and that is where the money would come from plus possibly from

fundraising and donations. There are organizations with volunteers that clean trails for free and there are organizations that put in trails and it would be relatively easy because that area has been logged. It's not very pretty right now he said.

Ms. Tanner said she went up Spring St. the other day for the first time in a long time and that section looked pretty bad.

Mr. Fisher said nature does wonderful work and with this being open like it is a lot of the trees that are left will be able to grow and create a new canopy. He said they will have to hire people to put in the trails but he didn't know how much it is going to cost yet.

Mr. Ballou recalled they used to get money from the Town from the moose plates and suggested they should look into it.

Mr. Fisher said other groups have come in when other people wanted to put land in conservation and they have asked the Con Com for donations and they have sometimes given \$5,000 towards people putting their land in conservation.

Ms. Tanner asked if they are still selling the moose plates.

Mr. Ballou said yes.

Mr. Fisher said this will be great for Farmington and it's not going to happen overnight. He said they are still in the negotiation phase and the family was sending a letter to the Town saying this is what they want to see happen with the land.

Ms. Tanner said there is no date for when this will be finalized.

Mr. Fisher said that is correct and they are still talking with SELT and a lot of people are involved and eventually it will be the Selectmen's choice on what they do with the land. He said he envisions doing something like they did at the McCarthy Trail but on a bigger scale and not just one trail. He said they still have to do title searches for the properties, surveys may have to be done although they did find some surveys for all 3 pieces of the property and he plans to do a walk of the area when he is better able to get out there and walk.

c). Any Other Old Business- None

**6). New Business:**

a). Intent to Cut- Tax Map R-46, Lot 003-Route 11-owned by William H. Cameron, submitted on April 29, 2022, 40 acres to be cut out of a total of 98.5 acres.

Ms. Tanner asked if this property is right on Rt. 11.

Mr. Fisher said it is a little bit off of Rt. 11 and he didn't look at the tax map but it says the access road is Rt. 11.

Ms. Tanner asked when they fill out the form if they put the reason why they are cutting it.

Mr. Fisher said no.

Mr. Vachon located the property on his phone and said it is at the end of Paulson Road behind the former Davidson Rubber site. He said its 400-600 ft. off Rt. 11 and there's a parcel between.

b). Any Other New Business- None

**7). New Members Needed:**

Chairman Fisher said he would like to put out to the public again that they need members. He said there are 2 alternate member positions open and a couple of open positions for full time members. We need help people he said.

Ms. Tanner suggested that they try using a couple of the suggestions they talked about at Monday's Selectmen's meeting, putting an ad on the community TV Channel 26, ask people to share it on their personal Face book page, putting up signs at the Transfer Station and the Municipal Office Building to advertise for new members.

Mr. Fisher said they used to be able to post it on the Town's Face book page and then people could share it off that page but Face book changed the rules to where you cannot share off of public forums. He said he has put it out on his Face book page and on the Con Com's page. He said they need to get the word out that they need members because the purpose of the Con Com is to oversee how this land is used in town and to protect it especially for those that have conservation easements on them. He said they can't do that without people and they have trails they need to look at and he can't get out there and do it due to his recent foot surgery. It doesn't take a lot of time, about a couple hours a month to help this town he said.

**8). Upcoming Dates:**

Next Meeting-Wednesday, June 8, 2022

Hay Day- Mr. Fisher said their next big event will be Hay Day on Sat., Aug. 20 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and the Rec. Dept. is working very hard to get Hay Day started again. He said he is looking forward to it and it is a good time for families to come out and have some fun.

**9). Adjournment:**

Motion: (Ballou, second Vachon) to adjourn the meeting passed 4-0 at 6:26 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

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William "Bill" Fisher, Chairman