

Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 14, 2018

Commission Members Present:

Laura Bogardus, Chairman
Bill Fisher, Secretary
Ann Titus, Selectmen's Rep.
Tom Sorensen
Richard Ballou

Commission Members Absent:

Randy Orvis, Vice Chairman, excused
Michelle Elbert, excused

Others Present:

Colin Lawson, Trout Unlimited New
England Culvert Project Manager

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:

Colin Lawson said he has been with Trout Unlimited for about 8 years and that his focus is reconnecting streams so fish can get upstream to spawn. He said they also do a lot of habitat work which includes cutting trees and putting them into streams to create hydraulics that will allow habitats to form over time. This comes from the natural idea of trees falling into streams and creating habitats and for many years the trees were cut out of the riparian areas so we have really young forests and not a lot of habitats he said.

Mr. Lawson said this project is focused on flood resiliency. He received a grant from the NH Charitable Foundation to work with communities around the state to target infrastructure vulnerable to storm events. In conjunction with the NH Geological Survey (NHGS) he has been assessing watersheds, collecting culvert data, running it through the models that they built and then providing that information to the NHGS and to the communities so they have an inventory of their infrastructure and an idea as to the vulnerability of that infrastructure to higher water flows and more frequent storms he said.

Mr. Lawson gave the members a packet of information containing a flyer from the Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) Fund Program. He said that any time a developer does work that impacts a wetlands area the contractor has to get a permit. The contractor has the choice to do the mitigation work themselves or pay a mitigation fee to the state which goes into this fund held by NH Dept. of Environmental Services (NHDES). The money is then awarded by a competitive Request for Proposals for people to do the restoration work with those funds. There are 9 different watersheds across the state and the money has to stay within the watershed area from where it was collected. He said what many Commissions don't know is if the wetland impact is in your town you have dibs on that money. The catch is the community

has to have a “shovel ready” project that is bona fide mitigation work to be eligible for the funding he said.

Mr. Lawson said he has done the landscapes scale assessments of infrastructure which is what drove him to begin participating in Flood Resiliency & Community Action Workshops. He said his goals with the workshops are to educate the community about what their infrastructure is and to find good projects where he can help to open up more habitats by reconnecting the stream channels. This helps the community by bringing grant funds to do that restoration work at no cost to the town he said.

He said for example, he was involved in a project in Swansea that reconnected 10 miles of upstream habitat by replacing an under sized culvert that kept flooding the road with a three sided arched culvert. The staff did the design and permitting work and found funding for the project so that an \$180,000 project ended up costing the Town \$20,000.

Mr. Lawson said much of his funding comes from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation which is a quasi-federal organization that receives money from several other federal programs, bundles it and makes it available for conservation work. There are also private foundations that provide funds to reconnect streams and protect the threatened fish species he said.

Mr. Fisher asked if he was working on the fish ladder project at the Cocheco Mills dam in Dover. Mr. Lawson said he is not a part of that project and that there are 7 chapters of Trout Unlimited in NH and there may be some other members or volunteers from the Dover area involved in that project. He said he was not sure that project would qualify for ARM funds because it is a dam but it could qualify for other state funding. He said he liked to take dams out instead of rebuild them but did work on a dam project where they built a by-pass channel around the dam to connect the downstream portion of the river to the upstream portion.

He said one of the first workshops took place in Warner regarding the Warner River Watershed and gave the Commission copies of an overview of that workshop to provide an idea of what the workshops are like. He said following one of the workshops the former Director of the Strafford Regional Planning Committee suggested he hold workshops for the towns in this region so he is looking to set up dates for workshops in Farmington, Middleton, Milton and New Durham.

Mr. Lawson said he would like to hold the workshops over the winter and is looking to bring in the decision makers in each of the towns. He said he is looking to help communities reconnect their aquatic systems and at the same time from a flood resiliency stand point if we fix something for flood resiliency anything they would put in would pass a 100 year storm and fish will be able to move through it.

He said the workshops are about what can be done to mitigate their infrastructure to make it more resilient to storm water, improve aquatic habitat, minimize sedimentation and have a healthier water supply. He normally conducts 2 workshops and has found it to be successful to hold them on Tuesdays from 4-6 p.m. which allows the Town staff to stay for a workshop and to

capture the people who get out of work a little early and any other interested residents. The first workshop focuses on the problems with streams and culverts and looking at maps to evaluate vulnerable town sites he said.

Mr. Lawson he has also partnered with the Piscataqua River Estuaries Partnership (PREP) which is based out of UNH and is funded by the EPA and NH Fish and Game and other federal sources. The organization exists to help protect the quality of Great Bay so everything going into the bay is of great concern to them. He said he requested funding to develop an initial 30% conceptual design plan for one structure in each town and received a \$10,000 from the organization which has to be spent by Dec. 15.

He said he originally planned to do the workshops and pick the top priorities to look at and use one of them as an example but the workshops can't be held until January so he went to the DPW Director and told him that he needed to pick a pipe so that he could get something done. We are able to do 1 pipe in town and my hope in these workshops is for the town to prioritize the top 5-10 sites and maybe come up with a list 15 potential projects that need to be worked on over the next 10 years he said.

Mr. Sorensen asked if Mr. Lawson only does culvert work and reconnection of streams. He explained that the commission has been trying to get a Veteran's/handicapped fishing spot but lack of funds has delayed the project.

Mr. Lawson said Trout Unlimited has a big Veteran's program and that would be a perfect project for the Great Bay Chapter. He said they are always looking for good projects and he could support it although it is not his target.

He said that he was hoping for a group of about 40 people to attend the workshops and it would be great to get 10 people from Farmington to participate. He suggested the audience should include the Road Agent/DPW Dept., Selectmen and a "champion" who will step up, get involved and make the project happen. If we were able to select a project and get funding we would do the design, engineering, permitting and construction oversight because we pay ourselves with "soft money" from the grants that we receive he said.

Mr. Lawson said he is meeting with the other 3 Con Com's and has reached out to his partnering state agencies and funding resources and would like to start scheduling workshop dates so they can be included on their calendars. He asked about the Town Meeting date and any other priority meetings to avoid any conflicts so people could come to the workshops.

Mrs. Titus suggested holding a workshop at a regular Con Com monthly meeting and to invite the Town Administrator, members of the other boards and the DPW. She said Mr. Lawson could make a presentation before the 10 decision makers he is looking to reach and that the meetings are also televised throughout the town.

Chairman Bogardus said more of the decision makers would be found at a Selectmen's meeting and suggested that Mr. Lawson consider making a presentation to them. She asked how they would find a champion to take on moving the project forward.

Mr. Lawson said for example a member of the Milton Con Com who is an engineer was enthusiastic about the projects and joked that he would talk him into becoming the project champion if necessary. You know who is in your community and it doesn't have to be an engineer but could be someone with an interest in fishing or is retired he said.

Mr. Sorensen asked if Mr. Lawson had spoken with Moose Mountains Regional Greenways.

Mr. Lawson said he spoke with MMRG Educational Outreach Coordinator Kari Lygren at a recent workshop and suggested their meeting space may accommodate one of the workshops. He suggested the 2nd half of January or the beginning of February as possible workshop dates. He said he would update the workshop overview handout to include Farmington with meeting place and dates to be determined so they could provide some information to the people they planned to invite to the workshop.

Mrs. Titus asked if the Town would need to provide matching funds to any grants received.

Mr. Lawson said there is no expense to the Town for the workshops. He said he met with DPW Director Gary Rogers and that he is totally on board with the proposal and they plan to meet again. He said it would be a good idea to inform the Town Administrator about the proposal.

Mrs. Titus said she would give him her handouts and request that the rest of the Selectmen receive copies in their meeting packets.

Chairman Bogardus asked if the general public could attend the workshops.

Mr. Lawson said the public is welcome to attend the workshops.

Chairman Bogardus asked Mr. Lawson to provide her with a copy of the workshop overview to use for advertising and to drum up interest in the upcoming workshops.

Mr. Lawson said he would provide her with an updated workshop overview and contact her regarding possible dates for workshops.

4). Review of Minutes:

Sept. 5, 2018 – No errors or omissions

Motion: (Fisher, second Sorensen) to accept the minutes as written passed 2-0-3 (Ballou, Fisher, Titus abstained)

Oct. 3, 2018 – Members noted for the record that the meeting was canceled due to a lack of a quorum.

Motion: (Titus, second Ballou) to table the matter to get clarification on the correct procedure passed 5-0.

5). Old Business:

Fall Clean Up – Chairman Bogardus said there were 8 participants at the cleanup and it went fairly well. She said they collected 180 pounds of trash.

Mr. Fisher said Cocheco and River Roads were cleaned up and that he sent in all of the required paperwork to the recycling company in exchange for their donation of trash bags.

Forums – Chairman Bogardus said the forum scheduled for October was postponed until spring

due to bad weather.

She said the Beekeeping Forum is scheduled for Nov. 29 at the Goodwin Library and that flyers have been posted with the date and time. She asked the members to post the forum information in the surrounding towns as there has been a lot of interest in this topic and everyone is invited to attend.

Any Other Old Business – Pump House Update- Mr. Sorensen said about 90% of the materials needed to close up the old pump house on the McCarthy Trail behind the Public Safety Building have been purchased. He said he planned to start the demolition work by the end of next week. Mr. Fisher asked to be notified when the work will begin so he can provide some assistance. Chairman Bogardus asked when the DPW planned to put boulders on the trail to prevent vehicles from using it because Home Depot needs access to the trail to install the wood cutouts for the trail stations and Mr. Sorensen needs to get the project materials to the pump house. Mrs. Titus said she did not know and suggested the Chairman contact the Town Administrator. She asked if the cutouts need to be “winterized” or if they plan to store them for the winter. Mr. Fisher said he put 3 coats of spar varnish on them and as soon as the Home Depot employee is available to pour the concrete to set the posts, the cutouts will be installed and will remain there.

6). New Business:

NH Assoc. Con Com’s (NHACC) Annual Meeting – Mr. Ballou said it was a good meeting and that the key note address was about climate change and was very convincing. He said he attended workshops on creating trails without affecting wildlife, beavers and coyotes. There were representatives from several groups such the Society for the Protection of NH Forests and the Southeast Land Trust present but there were also a lot of vendors there he said.

By-Laws – Members received copies of Con Com Bylaws in their meeting packets. Chairman Bogardus asked the members to bring any suggested changes to the December meeting and to plan to vote on them in January.

Any Other New Business- Invoices – Chairman Bogardus said she received an invoice from the NHACC for membership dues for \$350.

Motion: (Ballou, second Fisher) to pay the NHACC dues passed 5-0.

Chairman Bogardus said she also received an invoice from BH Keith for \$105 for some work done at the Town Forest.

Motion: (Ballou, second Fisher) to pay BH Keith passed 5-0.

Moose Forum – Chairman Bogardus said the moose forum was planned for this fall but was postponed due to time limitations. She suggested it be scheduled for Jan. or Feb. and asked if the members had any preference as to when the forum is scheduled.

Mr. Fisher suggested they hold off on scheduling any more forums for a few months as Jan. and Feb. are usually the worst months of the year weather-wise.

Mrs. Titus asked if they could plan for a snow date for the forum.

Chairman Bogardus said she would contact the speaker and find out if she would agree to schedule a snow date.

OHRV Trails – In an e-mail to Chairman Bogardus member Randy Orvis said that the OHRV Club is actively seeking trail corridors so they can be included in any conservation management plans. He said they can maintain the trails with club money and grants and there is a \$2 million state liability insurance policy for the trails once they are included in the trails system. She said if anyone wants to be included in the trail system to contact Mr. Orvis directly or to contact her and she will put them in touch with Mr. Orvis.

Thank You – Chairman Bogardus said she received a Thank You card from middle school student Sean Shavor who attended camp for 1 week sponsored by the Con Com. The note said that he shot shotguns, bows, rifles and pistols and they went fishing and on an overnight hike where they slept in shelters they hand made.

She said the school is currently working on obtaining essays from interested students for next year's camp scholarship and will choose a candidate in December who will be asked to attend the Jan. Con Com meeting and read their essay to the commission.

Mrs. Titus asked about the age limit to attend the camp.

Chairman Bogardus said the program is open to Henry Wilson Memorial School students only.

Handicapped Fishing Access – Ms. Bogardus said she was contacted by Barry Keith regarding the handicapped fishing access on the Dubois property on the Mad River. He wrote that the board was scheduled to discuss whether the members want him and Norway Plains to develop an access plan at this site last month but the meeting was canceled. He said their earlier work served to develop a baseline plan and flood profile and based on that the site was deemed not suitable for a handicapped fishing access. He said he recently met with Scott Lawler from Norway Plains and they discussed developing a concept and design for a 3-4 space gravel parking lot and a foot path with a wooden bridge over the channel as the most simple and least expensive alternative for the public to gain river access at this point. The river often floods beyond its banks at this location so no trail to the river will be planned as a river trail would be problematic due to the ongoing erosion process. He asked the commission to advise them as to how they wish for them to proceed.

Mr. Sorensen said it sounds like Mr. Keith was considering installing a lightweight bridge that could be easily and effectively replaced if it gets wiped out by a flood similar to the one on the French property.

Mr. Fisher said they would also have to replace the trails every time it got wiped out and he couldn't see spending the money to do that.

Chairman Bogardus said it sounded like the site wouldn't have trails.

Mr. Fisher said if there was going to be a handicapped access there would have to be trails to the river so people can get to the river.

Mr. Sorensen said he thought that Mr. Keith was going to propose a new location for the

handicapped fishing access when he came to the meeting.

Chairman Bogardus said that wasn't her understanding but that she would find out. She said she thought he planned to come up with something else for the site but that it wouldn't be handicapped accessible.

Mr. Fisher added it would also be difficult for older Veterans to get out there especially with no trails. He said they could put a bridge over it and then asked how they would get to the bridge.

Mr. Sorensen asked about using the proposed kayak launch at the Cocheco River on the property intended to become a solar farm on Cocheco Road.

Mr. Fisher, who is also a Planning Board member, said there is some difficulty with that property and that he was not at liberty to go into the details at this time. The kayak launch will be put on hold for a while and they are scheduled to return to the Planning Board he said.

Chairman Bogardus asked the members if they wished to instruct Mr. Keith and Mr. Lawler to come up with something for the little parking area and a foot path only with a wooden bridge.

Mr. Fisher said he thought the foot path and the bridge would get wiped out there and he could not see spending any money there. He suggested they consider going further down river closer to Route 11, maybe in the back area of the French property and find a scenic fishing area there.

Mrs. Titus asked if something more permanent could be installed instead of a wood structure.

Mr. Fisher said the huge ice flows that pass through the area would wipe out anything put in there even if they sunk pilings down into the ground and it would be a very expensive project.

Chairman Bogardus said she wondered why Mr. Keith suggested a foot bridge and if he has another plan.

Mr. Fisher suggested they invite Mr. Keith to attend a meeting to discuss his ideas.

Chairman Bogardus said she would ask Mr. Keith and added that she would rather find a place suitable for a handicapped access fishing spot.

Consensus of the members was not to move forward with a plan unless it is for a handicapped fishing access.

Con Com Budget- Mrs. Titus said the yearly line item total for the Con Com budget has been \$2,795 so the line has been level funded for 2019. She said they have spent \$1,868 thus far this year and that Town Administrator Arthur Capello asked her to relay to the members that if there is money left in the line that they wish to encumber they must submit it to him by Dec. 13. They can also make planned purchases for needed items with the remaining funds and remove the expenditure from their 2019 budget she said.

Chairman Bogardus asked about using some of the remaining funds to purchase T-shirts.

Mrs. Titus said the commission could make a decision about it but advised her to consult with Mr. Capello about the expenditures.

Mr. Fisher said at the previous Selectmen's meeting Mr. Capello said this would not be a "free-for-all buy what you want just because you want to have it". He said the Con Com needs game cameras because some of the existing cameras are broken and they also need small size safety

vests.

Mr. Sorensen suggested purchasing some industrial grade sign posts for the conservation properties to replace the ones damaged by plowing or vandalism.

Mr. Fisher disagreed and said he felt what they have for sign posts now are working fine and have lasted for 2 years in some spots so he couldn't see spending the money to replace them.

Mrs. Titus asked about the cost for cameras.

Mr. Fisher said he has seen them from about \$150 to about \$400 each at various retailers.

Chairman Bogardus said she thought there is enough left in the budget (approx. \$600) to buy one camera and suggested that is what they should spend the money on.

Mrs. Titus suggested they look into purchasing plain T-shirts and have them embroidered at a town business.

Motion: (Sorensen, second Titus) to purchase a camera not to exceed \$500;

Discussion: Chairman Bogardus asked if they were able to get more than 1 camera for that price if they could do so with this motion.

Amendment: (by Mr. Sorensen) that \$500 be allotted for game cameras;

Mrs. Titus accepted the amendment.

She then suggested they tell the retailer it is for the commission's use and see if they can get a discounted price.

Ms. Bogardus said she would find out if any discounts are available.

Vote: The motion passed 5-0.

Mrs. Titus asked if the Chair could spend money up to a certain amount without a vote of the members and if there is money left from the camera purchase if they could spend it on T-shirts.

Chairman Bogardus said she would find out if there is any discretionary spending allowed.

Cameron's Land Swap – Chairman Bogardus asked for the status of this issue.

Mrs. Titus said the matter is still in negotiation but she could say that the 2 sons of the previous owner have taken over the Route 11 business and presented a proposal to the board to change one of the access ways to exit only (instead of closing it as required in the original agreement).

Mr. Fisher said the Cameron's are working with the Town and that they even went out and found out how many accidents have occurred in the area and the causes of the accidents. He said the new owners were not involved in land swap agreement and were not aware of all of the requirements.

Mrs. Titus said the Cameron's will return for more discussion at a future Selectmen's meeting.

7). FYI:

Notices of Intent to Cut -

Sheepboro Road – Map R08, Lots 004 & 005, Linda Maynard, owner – 22 acres to be cut.

Sheepboro Road- Map R08, Lot 51, Betty Daily, owner – 10 acres to be cut

Meadorboro Road- no map or lot no., Jason and Laurie Ramsey, owners, 160 acres to be cut

8). Upcoming Dates:

Beekeeping Forum – November 29, 6 p.m. at the Goodwin Library

December Meeting – December 12, 6 p.m. at the Municipal Office Building

9). Adjournment:

Motion: (Titus, second Sorensen) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 7:45 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Laura Bogardus, Chairman