

Town of Farmington  
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, September 5, 2018

**Commission Members Present:**

Laura Bogardus, Chairman  
Randy Orvis, Vice Chairman  
Dave Connolly, Selectmen's Rep.  
Tom Sorensen  
Michelle Elbert

**Commission Members Absent:**

Bill Fisher, excused  
Richard Ballou

**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:**

August 8, 2018 – No errors or omissions

**Motion:** (Elbert, second Orvis) to accept the minutes as written passed 4-0-1 (Sorensen abstained).

**5). Old Business:**

**A). Hay Day-** Mr. Sorensen said the event was pretty successful and the commission received a lot of positive feedback about the displays and the hiking trails in town. He said several people asked if there are any new trails planned particularly in the Town Forest and that he told them plans for a trail at the Town Forest are currently underway. Shaun Shavor, who attended one week of camp at the Barry 4-H Camp sponsored by the commission, did a good job with his presentation and was enthusiastic and energetic he said.

Ms. Bogardus said there was a good turnout at the commission's booth and the NH Fish and Game's fur kit, the SAMM Van and Mrs. Elbert's recycling display were big draws to the booth.

Mr. Connolly asked if scaling down the display area this year was a good idea.

Ms. Bogardus said it seemed to work well and the things they had on display brought in enough people. She said the trails are a big thing with people and they really want to know about them.

**B). Forums – Timber Harvesting-** Mrs. Elbert said that NH Division of Forest & Lands Urban Forester A. J. Dupere said he is available for a Saturday forum on either Oct. 20 or Oct. 27.

Mr. Connolly said it would be helpful to educate the public who may see an Intent to Cut Notice or see the cutting taking place about why we timber harvest and the proper way to do so.

Mr. Orvis said the people who are doing the harvesting hire professional foresters but the

public needs to be educated about how fast trees grow and why harvesting is done.

Mrs. Elbert said she suggested the forum begin in the Public Safety Building and then move outside to the McCarthy Trail for some visual examples of how to manage trees.

Consensus of the commission was to invite Mr. Dupere to hold a public forum on Saturday, October 27 from 9 a.m. to noon followed by some light refreshments.

Mrs. Elbert said she would contact Mr. Dupere again to confirm plans and the details of what kind of information the commission is looking to provide to the public.

**Beekeeping-** Mrs. Elbert said the library is willing to co-host this forum with the Con Com at the library on Thursday, November 29 or Tuesday, December 11.

Consensus of the members was to hold the forum from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on whichever day is best for the speaker Amy Antonucci.

**Best Land Management Practices and Wildlife Awareness-** Mr. Orvis said he did not have an update on either topic at this time. He suggested NH Fish and Game Wildlife Biologist Kim Tuttle may be available to conduct a wildlife forum.

Discussion included possible sources for a wildlife speaker at the state level, local “special concern” and endangered species and educating the public about animal migration and habits.

**C). Blue Job Trail Signs-** Mr. Connolly asked for an update on the Blue Job trail signs.

Ms. Bogardus said she was still awaiting a response from NH State Parks Volunteer Program Manager Patrick Hummel. She said it is slow process because they must deal with the other aspects of the project before installing the signs.

Mr. Connolly advised her of the need to “keep after them” or they will forget about the matter.

Ms. Bogardus said during their last conversation she stressed that Meaderboro Road and Scruton Road residents are weary of receiving knocks on their doors from lost hikers who want to be taken back to their starting point. She said she would e-mail Mr. Hummel again and ask for a status report on the project.

Mr. Connolly said they have been dealing with this issue for about 6 years and that besides burdening Farmington residents with getting the hikers back to their cars there is also the issue of rescuing hikers which costs 1,000’s of dollars each time emergency personnel are called out. He said the project has been delayed over the years for several reasons and the signs are now done but are still not installed.

Ms. Bogardus said further reason for the delay is that one of the trails must be moved because a new house is being built and they are making sure the trail system is the way they want it before the signs are installed. The target date for the sign installations is next summer she said.

Mrs. Elbert asked who came up with the idea to put together the trail maintenance group.

Ms. Bogardus said Mr. Hummel is responsible for organizing the Friends of Trails and suggested the idea of helping to recruit members to her. She said if they are going to try to put together a trail maintenance group for the Blue Job trails they should do the same for the trails in town.

Mr. Orvis said part of the responsibility for the Blue Job trails belongs to Strafford because the

official trail is in Strafford. Little Blue Job and the peak is in Farmington he said.

Mr. Connolly said Farmington does not have the trail head which is in Strafford.

Mr. Orvis said that Strafford built a lot of the trails but does not have a very good record of maintaining them. He said he would find out Strafford's plans regarding the trails and if they would be interested in working with the Farmington Con Com to resolve this matter.

**D). Whistle Stop-** Mr. Connolly reminded everyone there will be a Whistle Stop with Selectmen on Wednesday, Sept. 19 at 6 p.m. at Fernald Park. He said this is an informal meeting to get to know the Selectmen with free food and live entertainment.

#### **6). New Business:**

**A). Masson Property** (Map R43, Lot 01; Meaderboro Road) – Mr. Connolly said he wanted to make the commission aware that the Assessor received a complaint from an abutter regarding junk vehicles and other apparatus on the lot. He said the Town does not own the lot but there is a conservation easement on the property so they have the right to enter the property, review the conditions there and to develop a plan to address the issues.

Mrs. Elbert asked if the old equipment is located on the easement or if the whole property is included in the easement.

Mr. Connolly said that except for a 3 acre cut-out the whole property is in the easement.

Ms. Bogardus asked who is responsible to pay for and conduct the clean-up of the property.

Mr. Connolly said that the easement contains a section on the breach of the easement and that typically any costs for actions taken by the Con Com can be charged to the land owner. The land owner is deceased, the heirs don't want anything to do with the lot and it may end up being taken by tax lien but the conservation easement is good forever no matter who owns it he said. Discussion included the lot across the street from this lot (Map R43, Lot 02) has been put out to bid by the Town, the potential to put it into conservation and if the junk materials are on the easement property (Lot 01) or are encroaching from an abutting property.

Mr. Connolly said a Google Earth photo shows the junk is on the easement property and that he would discuss putting Lot 02 into conservation with the Selectmen.

**B). Friends of Farmington-** Ms. Bogardus said the Friends are holding a Volunteer Networking Day on Sunday, Sept. 16 from 1 to 3 p.m. She suggested the commission have a table at the event to recruit new commission members, fall clean-up and trail maintenance volunteers.

Mr. Connolly said this is a good idea and noted that the commission currently has 1 full member, 3 alternate member and 2 non-voting student member positions open.

**C). 2019 Camper Sponsorship** – Mr. Connolly said he recently met up with Henry Wilson School Guidance Counselor Donna Ellis and spoke to her about selecting a student to attend camp for 1 week at the Barry Conservation Camp. He said Ms. Ellis asked that the commission contact her as soon as possible to begin the process for 2019.

Ms. Bogardus asked about the parameters for choosing the student camper.

Mr. Connolly said they must notify the camp before Jan. 31 about which week the Farmington

student will attend the camp so that the administrator can save a boy's and a girl's spot during that week until they are notified who has been chosen to attend that session.

He said any interested Henry Wilson students who meet the income guidelines for the school lunch program are potential candidates to attend camp.

Chairman Bogardus said she would contact the camp administrator and Ms. Ellis to get the process started for next year's camper.

**D). Ronci Property-** Mr. Connolly said a few years ago the commission hired BH Keith and Norway Plains conduct a feasibility study on a handicapped access fishing area on the property. He said their report came back as not favorable for the idea but he recalled Mr. Keith and Mr. Lawler saying they could provide them with some suggestions that might work there. He asked if Ms. Bogardus would contact Mr. Keith and ask about receiving those suggestions.

Ms. Bogardus said she asked Mr. Keith about the suggestions and he said that if the commission would like them to investigate options beyond the original scope of the work previously contracted the additional work would be billed on an accrued hours and expenses basis.

Mr. Connolly said when they gave their report at a Con Com meeting they stated that they could provide them with another potentially feasible location or other activity at the site.

Mr. Orvis said the commission should have received a copy of the plan that was done for the potential project. He said he disagreed with Mr. Keith's assessment that it couldn't be done there but acknowledged that it will be expensive to do so.

Mr. Connolly said there is approx. 100 yards on the Route 11 side of the bridge on River Road where a ramp could be built to allow handicapped fly fishing.

Mrs. Elbert asked if there is a grant writer or someone to research funds for this type of project.

Mr. Connolly said he has some contacts if they get to point of looking for funds for the project.

Mr. Orvis said they would need to have a proposal and cost estimate first.

Mr. Connolly said he would do some research to see if he could find the videotape of the meeting when the feasibility report was given to the Con Com.

Ms. Bogardus asked if the members wanted to try to make the plan feasible at the that location or to choose another location for the plan.

Consensus of the members was to hear from Mr. Keith and Mr. Lawler first.

Mrs. Elbert asked if they gave the reasons they felt the plan was not feasible.

Mr. Orvis said it was because the site is in the flood plain, the ice flows would wipe out any structure put there and the amount of bed rock there. He said there is a little pool and some small rapids there and it is the kind of place where you would want to drop a fly into.

Mr. Connolly said the river is stocked by NH Fish and Game and by protecting the river as much as possible and putting in some type of recreational entity there that would increase the chance of Fish and Game stocking the river even more.

**E). Fall Clean-up** – Chairman Bogardus asked if they should hold a fall clean-up this year.

Consensus of the commission was to schedule the event again for this year.

Mr. Connolly said he will ask the Police Chief to reserve the conference room at the Public Safety Building as the start/end point of the project. He said the past afternoon clean-ups have been more successful and suggested they hold the next one on a Sunday beginning at 1 p.m. Consensus of the members was to schedule the fall clean-up for Sunday, October 14 from 1 to 4 p.m. with a rain date of Oct.21.

Mrs. Elbert said she would contact local businesses and request donations for refreshments.

Mr. Sorensen said people have asked about starting their own neighborhood clean-ups and asked if this was something the commission wants to get involved in.

Mr. Connolly said this would be a good topic for the Volunteer Day and that the commission should support the idea. He said they can get the blue bags donated and provide the items needed to do the pick-up in a safe manner such as the signs, vests and gloves and possibly organize the pick-up of the materials collected if necessary.

Mr. Sorensen said he would create the flyer to advertise the event and post it on Face book.

Mrs. Elbert suggested they try to get the Boy Scouts involved in the project.

Ms. Bogardus said she would contact the Boy Scout leaders.

**F). NHACC Annual Meeting-** Ms. Bogardus said the NH Association of Conservation Commissions Annual Meeting and Conference will take place on Nov. 3 from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Pembroke Academy. She said the keynote speaker is Richard Primack, Professor of Biology at Boston University, there will be 9 topic groups and if you sign up before Oct. 19 the cost is \$60.

**Motion:** (Connolly, second Elbert) to expend up to \$180 to allow 3 members to attend the NHACC Annual Meeting and Conference on Nov. 3 passed 5-0.

**G). Town Forest Signs-** Mr. Connolly said he did a drive by around the property a few weeks ago and the Waldron and Abbott signs need serious work. The Abbott sign needs new wood and to be repainted and the Waldron sign only needs repainting he said.

Mr. Sorensen said that Barry Keith will be working to extend the parking lot there and agreed to “upright” the sign but the Con Com would be responsible for painting it.

Mr. Connolly said the landscaping around the Abbott sign has contributed to the deterioration of the posts and frame for the sign.

Mr. Sorensen said Mr. Keith suggested that clearing out some of the vegetation would allow better monitoring of the area from the road and let the sun in to dry everything out. He also suggested that any end cuts be capped to prevent water from getting inside the posts.

Mr. Sorensen said that Mr. Fisher requested that he make a motion to allow him to spend \$25 to purchase 2 metal posts for the Dubois property and 1 for the French property. He said he did not agree with purchasing the metal posts because they are very flexible, easily damaged and will rust. After 1 year 3 of the metal posts need to be replaced due to vandalism and that something more permanent is needed he said.

Mr. Connolly asked Mr. Sorensen to obtain cost estimates for more permanent sign posts. He suggested spending \$25 to replace the posts now and then come up with a more permanent

solution to the problem to be implemented in the spring after plowing season is over.

**Motion:** (Connolly, second Sorensen) to allow Bill (Fisher) to spend up to \$25 to replace the needed posts for the signs passed 5-0.

**H). Cameras-** Mr. Connolly asked if there are any security cameras left in the Con Com office. Mr. Sorensen said all of the cameras are currently in use.

Mr. Connolly asked if they will need to buy new cameras.

Mr. Sorensen said they will need to purchase cameras as soon as Mr. Keith is done with the work at the Town Forest as there are no cameras left to install there. He said he has been unsuccessful so far at repairing one of the cameras which may have to be replaced.

Mr. Connolly said cameras typically have a 3-4 year life span and the current cameras are probably outdated so they are lucky that they have been working as well as they are.

Mr. Sorensen said a resident suggested getting a camera that will send out a notification as soon as it takes a picture. He said that the photos can be downloaded to your cell phone and you don't ever have to touch the camera except to change the batteries.

Mr. Connolly said that the cameras are not inexpensive and that cell phone service and a cell phone plan specific to that camera are required.

Mr. Sorensen said they may be able to find a camera that will work with enclosures from the current cameras and save on having to purchase new enclosures. He suggested they also look at cameras that use rechargeable batteries to save on replacing batteries.

Mr. Connolly said disposable batteries last longer and are more convenient than rechargeable batteries.

Mr. Sorensen asked if they need to put out cameras during the winter.

Mr. Connolly said cameras are needed 24 hours a day/7 days a week even in winter as the properties are advertised for public use year round. He said a camera set up costs about \$400 and suggested that they figure out the number of cameras needed and how many of the older cameras need to be replaced and plan for it in their proposed budget for next year. He asked about the status of the current budget.

Chairman Bogardus said the budget is in good shape and estimated there is about \$1,500 left.

Mr. Connolly suggested the Chair request the budget totals for the operating budget and the conservation budget from the Finance Administrator for their next meeting.

**Motion:** (Connolly, second Bogardus) to take a 5 minute recess passed 4-0-1 (Orvis abstained) at 7:30 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 7:35 p.m.

**I). Meeting Change-** Mr. Connolly said that following the Con Com's vote to change their meeting day from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month to the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month at the request of the Budget Committee, the Bud Com decided not to change their meeting day.

**Motion:** (Connolly, second Sorensen) to go back to meeting on the second Wednesday of the month passed 5-0.

**J). Water Tower-** Mr. Connolly asked about the status of the repairs to the old water tower at

the McCarthy Trail.

Mr. Sorensen said there was no update on the tower and that he would talk to Mr. Fisher about when they could get the work done.

**K). Con Com Bylaws** – Mr. Connolly requested that they begin reviewing the bylaws in October, discuss any change requests in November, vote on the changes in December and then send them to the Selectmen for review and approval in January.

**L). MMRG Annual CC Mixer**- Ms. Bogardus said the mixer is on Sept. 27 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Milton Town Hall. The speaker will be Wolfeboro Director of Planning and Development Matt Sullivan. She said she will post the meeting information on Face book.

**M). Invoices**- Chairman Bogardus asked for motions on the following invoices:

**BH Keith**- \$135 for the Wildlife opening and inspection for the Dubois property.

**Motion**: (Connolly, second Orvis) to pay the \$135 invoice to BH Keith for services stated passed 5-0.

**BH Keith**- \$435 (7 hours) to prepare the 2018 annual activity report and attend the state easement monitoring annual site inspection for the French and Dubois properties

**Motion**: (Connolly, second Orvis) that we pay the \$435 invoice to BH Keith for services rendered as stated passed 5-0.

**Steve Yurick**- \$300 for mowing the French lot

**Motion**: (Orvis, second Sorensen) to pay the \$300 passed 5-0.

Chairman Bogardus asked if the members wished to review the property inspection report. Mr. Connolly suggested they review it at next month's meeting.

**7). FYI**: None

## **8). Upcoming Dates:**

**Sept. 16**- Friends of Farmington Volunteer Day

**Oct. 10** – Next Con Com meeting

Members noted there are several other meetings/events planned for that night and decided to hold off changing back to the second Wednesday of the month until November.

**Motion**: (Bogardus, second Sorensen) to hold the October Con Com meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 3 passed 5-0.

## **9). Adjournment:**

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

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon, Recording Secretary

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Laura Bogardus, Chairman

