

Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting
Wednesday, January 13, 2016

Commission Members Present:

Dave Connolly, Chairman
Randy Orvis, Vice Chairman
Resta Detwiler
Rose Muise (6:30 p.m.)

Commission Members Absent:

Richard Ballou, excused
Laura Bogardus, excused
Jackie Bissell, excused

Others Present:

Residents Rod Thompson, Robert Hills
Jeremy Lougee, SELT (Southeast Land Trust) Conservation Projects Manager

Chairman Connolly called an informational meeting at 6:10 p.m. due to the lack of a quorum.

SELT – Discussion on Proposed Hills Farm Conservation Project:

Jeremy Lougee introduced Robert Hills, owner of the 52 acre parcel located at the corner of Pound and Ten Rod Roads to the members. Mr. Lougee returned to the commission to follow up on last month's discussion with an estimated budget for the project. He provided a handout containing the proposed expenses and potential revenues and an aerial photo of the property. He also gave a slide presentation citing several features found on the property (Rattlesnake River, prime farmland soils, wildlife habitats, historic Town Pound, Coastal Plan Priority Area) and additional information about easement process. Lougee said expenses would include land acquisition costs, hazardous waste survey, appraisals, legal and recording fees, project management costs and easement stewardship costs totaling \$213,250. The budget estimate includes a \$5,000 contingency in case of any "unknown hurdles" he said. Potential funding sources include federal grants (NRCS-ALE and PREP), state grants (NH DES and NH SCC Moose Plates), the Town of Farmington Conservation Fund, landowner and foundation donations. Lougee estimated \$116,250 may be available at this point leaving about \$97,000 to be raised. Discussion included possible Conservation Commission contribution, estimated easement appraisal value, if the appraisal increases the grant will increase, if the members favored the project, the need for a public hearing to spend money from the Conservation Fund, the federal grant requires a 25% local funds match and the Conservation Fund didn't receive funds from current use taxes in 2015. At 6:30 p.m. member Rose Muise arrived and Chairman Connolly declared a quorum of members were present and called the official monthly meeting to order. Mr. Lougee brought Ms. Muise "up to speed" with the presentation and discussion thus far. Additional discussion included naming the Conservation Commission as an "executory interest", establishing a Wetland Reserve Easement for the wetlands area along the southern edge of the parcel

and the possibility of using volunteer hours as the local match required for the federal grant. Mr. Hill said he lived on a dairy farm until he was 18 years old and decided it was time to get back to the farm. He purchased the property three years ago with the intent of operating a dairy farm to make milk for local butter and cheese producers. He said the last thing he wanted to see is the land developed into anything other than a farm. He added that his son and daughter are okay with the plan to conserve the parcel and that he wished he had more than 52 acres that could be placed in conservation. Chairman Connolly commended Mr. Hill's plans and explained that if the commission voted to make a contribution it would not specify a specific action but would state that up to a specific amount could be spent. Consensus was to spend up to \$10,000 from the Conservation Fund for the easement acquisition. A Public Hearing will be held on March 16, 2016 at 7 p.m. in the Selectmen's Chambers at the Municipal Office Building. The hearing will be posted on the Town website and in Foster's Daily Democrat newspaper. Mr. Lougee agreed to notify the abutters about the hearing.

Recess- Chairman Connolly called for a 5 minute recess at 6:55 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 7 p.m.

Old Business:

A). Bylaws Amendments- Members signed the requested changes to the Commission bylaws and they will be sent to the Board of Selectmen for their review. Chairman Connolly will also provide a copy to member Muise.

B). Aquifer Update/Resta- Ms. Detwiler reported that the Planning Board approved the amendment to the ordinance which if approved by voters at Town Meeting would expand the groundwater protection area. She then read the proposed amendment aloud and said the proposal will appear as a ballot question at Town Meeting. She added that the text of the amendment will be available on the town website.

C). School Outreach/Resta-

Henry Wilson Memorial School- Ms. Detwiler reported she met with the Principal and Guidance personnel and found they were interested in a recycling program which they would like to tie with Ecology Week planned for May at the school. Discussion also included Commission sponsorship of a student for a week at the Berry 4-H Camp.

Farmington High School-The Honor Society will hold a meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 20 at 2:45 p.m. at the school to discuss a recycling program. Available members will attend the meeting. A student is working on a Power Point presentation. Ms. Detwiler will provide videos for the presentation. Chairman Connolly suggested she meet with the new Environmental Sciences teacher and discuss recruiting student reps to the Conservation Commission.

Valley View Community School- Ms. Detwiler said she contacted the school again but has yet to receive a response.

Ms. Detwiler said she also contacted Waste Management online for available informational materials and collection bins. She has not yet received a response. Chairman Connolly suggested contacting a local representative by phone may be more effective.

D). Town Forest/Dave- Chairman Connolly reported that since Mr. Gerard left BH Keith it has been hard to communicate with the company. He said there has not been a reply to his e-mail asking what the next step is in the forest management plan. He said he received two reports regarding the timber harvest

(\$10,055.93) and the final revenues (\$11,609.17). Minus the culvert installation, fees and commissions a total of \$13,912.27 will be deposited in the Conservation Fund he said.

E). Conservationist of the Year- Chairman Connolly asked the members to consider nominations for the title to be discussed at next month's meeting. Individual residents, groups, businesses or Town depts. are eligible for nomination he said.

F). Arbor Day- Discussion included finding an activity for the community to commemorate Arbor Day. Last year a tree was planted at the Farmington Children's Center and members considered possible sites for tree planting this year. Vice Chairman Randy Orvis spoke about a UNH program that distributes American chestnut trees and suggested the commission try to obtain one or two for the planting.

Motion: (Orvis, second Muese) to donate a tree or two to the Henry Wilson Memorial School for Arbor Day on April 29, 2016 passed unanimously.

G). Earth Day- Members discussed ways to publicize the yearly trash clean-up event, how to get more participants so more streets can be cleaned, asking businesses to participate and/or donate to the event, contacting Litter Free NH for informational materials and litter bags and the number of volunteers has decreased over recent years.

Chairman Connolly then suggested the clean-up be moved to the second Saturday in May to try to avoid cancelling/rescheduling due to bad weather. After a brief discussion Connolly said the actual date for the Earth Day clean-up will be announced.

H). Proposed 2016 Operating Budget- Chairman Connolly reported he gave a breakdown of the Conservation Commission's proposed budget to Selectmen. The total operating budget for this year is \$2,795. Selectmen have turned over the proposed town budget to the Budget Committee for their review he said.

I). Any Other Old Business-

Invasive Plants Forum- Ms. Detwiler suggested members co-sponsor another session with the Moose Mountains Regional Greenways this year. She agreed to contact the MMRG and UNH speaker Wendy Scribner to gauge their interest and availability.

New Business:

A). Town Report Picture and Report- Chairman Connolly suggested the members wait until the February meeting to have more members present for the photo. He gave a copy of the report of the Commission's 2015 accomplishments that will be included in the annual Town Report for their review. Ms. Detwiler noted that her last name was misspelled in the third paragraph (one L in Detwiler).

Motion: (Orvis, second Detwiler) to accept the report as the committee report with one correction for the Town Report passed unanimously.

B).SELT Monitoring Reports/Dave- Chairman Connolly told the members he received reports on four properties with easements and gave a brief summary of the findings as follows:

1). Huppe property- the boundaries and corners are well defined, no signs have been installed, a "No Cutting" sign was placed in the wetlands area, all covenants are held and no further investigation is required.

2). Maynard property- the fields were last mowed one year ago, there is a big headstone in the cemetery but "no one resides there", no further investigation or recommendations needed.

3). Smith property- some parts of the boundaries need clarification, some corners need improvement,

small amount of trash, graffiti and signs of campfires found, needs “No Fires” signs, commission will discuss further monitoring in the spring.

4). Whitcomb property- there is an issue with abutter encroachment from the back of a lot in Lancelot Shores, brush piles, material storage found. The SELT will follow up with the owner.

The reports will be placed in the Commission’s files Connolly said.

C). Conservation Fund Balance- Chairman Connolly told the members a total of \$32,047 is currently in the fund. The funds come from timber harvests, current use tax revenues and donations he said. This figure does not include the \$13,000 discussed earlier in the meeting. The new fund balance will be \$45,959 he said. He added another timber harvest is scheduled for the Town Forest later this year.

D). NHACC 2016 Dues- Chairman Connolly said it is time to renew membership in the NH Assoc. of Conservation Commissions. The cost is \$345 to remain a member of the organization he said.

Motion: (Orvis, second Detwiler) to expend \$345 to remain a member of the NHACC passed unanimously.

E). Any Other New Business-

Responsible Trail Riding- Vice Chairman Orvis suggested the commission hold a forum on Responsible ATV Riding. He will investigate possible co-sponsors and/or speakers for the event.

7). Review Minutes:

Dec. 9, 2015-

Motion: (Orvis, second Detwiler) to accept the minutes as written passed 3-0-1 (Muisse abstained).

8). F.Y.I.:

Intent to Cut Notices-

(R66, Lot 09) Ten Rod Road, 2 acres, Richard Faulky; (R58, Lot 8-4) Hornetown Road, 7 acres, Shirley Cameron; (R64, Lot 12) Route 11, 35 acres; (R65, Lot 10) Route 11, 6 acres; Golden Circle, 40 acres; Eben Dorr, 40 acres; Ten Rod Road, 17 acres, Jim Woodman.

Pond Impacted- Chairman Connolly said he received a report from the Dept. of Environmental Services Water Division regarding a complaint of impact to a pond filed by the property owner for 91 Charles Street (R12, Lot 008). The name of the suspected violator was not included in the report. DES will handle the complaint he said.

9). Next Meeting:

Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2016 at 6 p.m.

10). Any Other Business: None.

11). Adjournment:

Motion: (Detwiler, second Orvis) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 8 p.m.

Respectively submitted
Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary

