

Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 13, 2017

Commission Members Present:

Dave Connolly, Chairman
Randy Orvis, Vice Chairman
Bill Fisher, Secretary
Patience Taylor
Laura Bogardus
Tom Sorensen
Richard Ballou

Commission Members Absent:

Charlie King, Selectmen's Rep, excused

Others Present:

Residents Kyle Allard and guardian

1). Call to Order:

Chairman Connolly called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

2). Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3). Public Comment:

Chairman Connolly welcomed new member Tom Sorensen to the Commission.

4). Kyle Allard/Barry 4H Camp:

Henry Wilson School student Kyle Allard came forward to share his experiences as a camper at the Barry Conservation 4H Camp in Berlin, NH for one week sponsored by the Con Com.

Kyle said campers learned how to shoot, fish, archery, survival skills, kayaking and canoeing. He said they also went on a 19 mile hike and camped out on a mountain overnight.

An adult accompanying Kyle said the camping program was a great experience for Kyle and it offered him the opportunity to meet and understand other people better and what is going on in our woods. He thanked the Commission for providing him with the opportunity.

Mr. Orvis asked about the types of survival skills the campers were taught.

Kyle said they were taught to construct and set snares, build shelters and camp fire building.

Mr. Connolly asked if he caught any fish during he stay at the camp.

Kyle said he did not catch any fish but another camper did catch one fish.

Mr. Fisher said that Kyle also attended Hay Day and helped the Commission by providing a Power Point presentation and talking to people about his knowledge and experiences at camp.

The members thanked him for his support at Hay Day and said they enjoyed his presentation.

Mr. Connolly asked if he saw any wildlife while at camp.

Kyle said he did not see any wildlife except for a few deer.

Mr. Connolly asked if Kyle had any questions for the Commission.

Kyle said he did not have any questions.

Mr. Connolly said he was glad the Con Com could make attending camp happen for him and that

they appreciated that he came to the meeting to share his experience with them. He said that hearing this makes him want to advocate for the Con Com to do it again next year for another lucky student. He asked Kyle to tell all his friends that the Con Com offers this opportunity each year for Henry Wilson School students to experience. Pass on the good word he said.

5). Old Business:

A). Hay Day Summary- Mr. Connolly thanked all of the members who participated at the annual event. He said they had good time despite the fact that Hay Day could have been better. He also thanked Seacoast Eat Local (SAM Van), Moose Mountains Regional Greenways (Kari) and Strafford County Conservation District (Alena Warren) for their participation. He noted that the organizations were very pleased with the response from and interaction with the public.

B).Fall Clean Up- Mr. Connolly reminded the viewers that the cleanup is scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 17 from 1 to 4 p.m. and asked participants to meet at the Public Safety Building. The DPW Deputy Director will have the rack truck available for use and will inform the Transfer Station staff that the volunteers will be bringing trash into the facility at the end of the day. He said the number of roads to be cleaned will depend on the number of volunteers that turn out.

Ms. Bogardus said there will be pizza for participants following the pickup.

Mr. Connolly thanked the Farmington House of Pizza for their generous support over the years.

Mr. Fisher said he will provide the soft drinks and pick up and transport the bags, vests, gloves and forms to the Public Safety Building.

Ms. Taylor said she attempted to contact a Boy Scout leader to invite them to participate but was unable to do so because the phone was disconnected.

Mr. Connolly suggested she contact the Town Administrator whose son is a troop member for contact information.

C). Permaculture Forum- The forum is scheduled for Wednesday, Sept.20 from 5-7 p.m. The location has been moved to the Friends of Farmington Building, 480 Main Street, Farmington.

D). McCarthy Trail Update- Mr. Connolly said the project is moving along well and thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Fisher and Ms. Taylor the signs are in place at the trail.

He said work on the cutout characters being constructed by Home Depot employees is not coming along as fast as they would like but progress is being made. When the cutouts are completed the employees will coordinate their installation and an auger or posthole digger will be needed to get them into the ground.

Mr. Fisher said he will pick up the tool when they are ready for installation.

Mr. Connolly said placement of the memorial bench is planned for about 5-6 feet behind the trailhead sign. He said the wood for the 4'x6' base and legs is being donated by Selectman Charlie King and the granite will be donated by Winnisquam Wood Products in Farmington. He said he consulted Tut's Trophies and Awards in Rochester for pricing for a plaque for the bench. The prices for an 8" x 10" plaque with unlimited lettering are as follows; stainless steel (\$280), bronze (\$352) and brass (\$368).

Mr. Sorensen asked if the company donating the granite offers granite etching.

Mr. Connolly said they do not and recommended that the granite not be etched.

Following a brief discussion on the maintenance needed for the various materials and which would best stand up to the winter weather Mr. Connolly asked if the members wished to go forward with the purchase of a plaque for the bench.

Motion: (Fisher, second Bogardus) to purchase a plaque not to exceed \$400 passed unanimously.

Motion: (Ballou, second Fisher) to purchase a bronze plaque passed unanimously.

Mr. Connolly said he has a copy of Mr. McCarthy's obituary and he planned to take excerpts from it for the inscription on the plaque.

Mr. Fisher said he will need money for hardware to construct the bench and a good quality oil based stain to preserve the wood portions. He estimated the stain will cost about \$40 a gallon and about \$35 for hardware.

Motion: (Ballou, second Taylor) to spend up to \$100 to purchase the parts needed to put the bench together passed unanimously.

Mr. Connolly then said that Winnisquam Wood Products recommended that an epoxy adhesive be used to adhere the granite to the base of the bench. He said the epoxy is available at Cameron's Home and Garden Center but he did not know the cost.

Mr. Orvis suggested the cost of the epoxy may be covered by the \$100 they just approved to spend to put the bench together.

Mr. Fisher said he will stop by Cameron's for more information on epoxy products.

Mr. Connolly said he also plans to meet with the DPW Deputy Director to discuss making the water tower on the trail safer before the trail will be opened to public.

Mr. Fisher he would also like to attend the meeting and show them the location of a tree in danger of falling so it can be addressed before the trail is opened to public use.

E). Any Other Old Business- None

6). New Business:

A). Dubois and French Yearly Monitoring Reports- Mr. Connolly said that each year NH Fish & Game does a monitoring walk of the properties and Barry Keith also attended the walks. He then read portions of the resulting reports to the members as follows:

Dubois Property- Fish & Game conducted the walk on August 29, 2017 and no violations were found. Description of the property includes upland forests, some river front, established trails and a parking area on the north side of the parcel. The parking area is the only public access to the property that does not require crossing private property.

The boundaries are in excellent condition and were refurbished/repainted in 2012.

A stewardship plan needs to be submitted and approved prior to commencing forestry or wildlife management activities.

In the parking area, the cement pillars from last year were removed, a lot of trash was found and the cameras were still in place.

ATV use was noted in the open field and the gate was open allowing ATV access through the easement. Some snow mobile use was noted and installation of two gates at the other snow

mobile accesses to the property was discussed but funding has not been established for the proposal.

A soil sample was sent to the Cooperative Extension for analysis for fertilization next year to support clover growth.

It was suggested that a tree harvest be conducted in 5 years with the current open space to be used for the log landing due to limited access to property.

Mr. Connolly noted that a GPS map of the walk was also included in the report.

Mr. Keith reported that the overall condition of lot is good with no significant blow down or erosion evident. The forest is exhibiting general improvement and vigor, the opening was fully vegetated with grass and herbaceous plant cover and the gate to wildlife opening was in a locked open position.

He recommended that the gate be kept closed and locked, to put the planned fertilization on hold, that a composite soil sample be analyzed for future fertilizer applications and to encourage grass growth by mowing it in late summer or early fall.

Mr. Connolly said the mowing could be scheduled by Mr. Keith or the Commission could go directly to Mr. Yurick to contract the mowing services.

Motion: (Orvis, second Ballou) to go directly to Steve Yurick for mowing passed unanimously.

French Property- Fish & Game also conducted this site walk on August 29 and no violations were observed. Description of the property included a mix of habitats with pockets of poorly drained soils interspersed with uplands. The Mad River is a prominent feature with some fishing use noted. The snow mobile trail that was built in 2006 runs through a portion of property and the easement allows for a parking area that was begun in 2014.

The boundaries are in excellent condition with painting and maintenance done 2011, the property was surveyed in 2010, a management plan was approved in 2010 and the forestry plan approved in 2011 is scheduled for renewal in 2017.

Additional markings and tags along boundaries and trail crossings were installed, the bridges were found to be in great condition and the rivers are flowing better than last year. An abandoned suitcase and clothing was found adjacent to the trail and the unidentified deer stand is still present.

The open wildlife area on the southeast portion of the property is still being maintained and was recently mowed. The Aspen was left on site to diversify the growth there and a future cut is suggested in five years to allow for varied age growth.

The town's plans for an ADA accessible trail on the Ronci property were noted.

Mr. Keith reported that the property is in good general condition, the boundaries were well marked but some conservation signs are missing or are in need of repair.

The new stand growth has improved the stand quality, the trailhead parking area and kiosk sign are in good condition. The trail is in excellent condition with foot traffic evident and the trail markers and foot bridge signs in good condition.

The vernal pools along corridor were observed to be active, the Aspen component is flourishing, and masses of black berries, and deer, turkey and song birds were sighted.

Mr. Keith recommended further development of the nature stations and brochure and the continued monitoring of the trail activity and usage. He suggested the bush hogging for the wildlife opening be scheduled for late summer/early fall 2018 to establish a bi-annual cycle of vegetative maintenance and the renewal of the stewardship plan in 2017.

Mr. Orvis asked if there is a policy on tree stands.

Mr. Connolly said that this tree stand was found two years ago. He said he contacted Fish & Game and law enforcement and because it is Fish & Game property they don't need permission to be there. The stand has to be identified with the owner's name and it is up to law enforcement to stake it out and see who gets into the stand and then cite them for not having identification on the tree stand he said.

Mr. Orvis said the identification requirement is similar to having a bob house on a lake or a trap- you have to have your name on it.

Mr. Connolly said he was also advised the Con Com could take the tree stand down and leave a note instructing the owner to contact the Commission if they want it back.

Mr. Orvis asked if this tree stand has been there so long that it has grown into the tree.

Mr. Connolly said this stand has not grown into the tree but one at the other end of the habitat has grown into the tree. He added that tree stands can only be strapped to trees and permanent steps or use of screws is prohibited.

Mr. Connolly said the Commission currently has a contract with BH Keith to oversee these properties which is due for renewal and suggested the Commission renew the contract.

Motion: (Bogardus, second Ballou) to have BH Keith renew the management plan pass unanimously.

Mr. Connolly said Mr. Keith has submitted an invoice for attending the walks and state inspection for \$347.50

Motion: (Orvis, second Bogardus) to pay the invoice for \$347.50 to BH Keith passed unanimously.

B). NHACC Annual Meeting- The 47th Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, Nov. 4 at Pembroke Academy in Pembroke, NH. Ms. Bogardus, Mr. Ballou and Mr. Orvis plan to attend.

C). VVCS Tree- Mr. Connolly recalled that three years ago Cameron's donated and planted two trees for Arbor Day at the Valley View Community School. He reported that one of the trees was ripped out of the ground and destroyed. The administration has had a fence installed around the remaining tree and where the second tree was planted. He asked if the members wanted to rectify the situation.

Motion: (Bogardus, second Taylor) to replace the tree at VVCS passed unanimously.

Mr. Orvis asked if the school district's insurance would cover the loss.

Mr. Connolly said he will ask someone in the administration about the insurance coverage and also speak to someone at Cameron's and explain what happened to the tree.

Mr. Orvis said he mentioned the insurance company not only to cover the loss but also because if the insurance company becomes involved they will push to find the offenders as they will want to recover what they pay out for the claim.

D). Any Other New Business- Mr. Connolly said he contacted David Viale of Southeast Land Trust (SELT) regarding the non-public session about a proposed conservation easement held a few months ago for permission to unseal the minutes of the meeting but has not received a response.

He said he has been informed of a grant that would reimburse 50% of the cost of the appraisal up to \$3,500. The grant would be written and handled by SELT he said.

Motion: (Bogardus, second Sorensen) to move forward with the grant application passed unanimously.

Student Members-Mr. Connolly said he was contacted by the Extended Learning Coordinator at Farmington High School who said there are some students who may be interested in becoming student representatives to the Con Com. He said there are two student seats available and that he hoped to have more information at the next meeting.

7). Review of August Minutes:

August 8, 2017- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Orvis, second Bogardus) to approve the minutes as written passed 4-0-3 (Ballou, Sorensen, Taylor abstained).

8). FYI:

Mr. Fisher presented a glass front shadow box and cover he built for the display of a deer skull found by Mr. Connolly.

Mr. Connolly said he planned to display the skull and other animals at Hay Day and at the planned educational center at the Town Forest. He thanked Mr. Fisher for his work and said the box will be placed in storage until the next opportunity for display.

9).October Dates:

Next Meeting- Wednesday, Oct. 11, 2017, 6 p.m.

Fall Cleanup – Sunday, Sept.17, 2017, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Permaculture Seminar- Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2017, 5p.m. to 7 p.m.

10). Any Other Business:

Mr. Orvis asked for an update from the Pound Road site walk.

Mr. Connolly said he is still trying to get all of the property owners' contact information.

11). Adjournment:

Motion: (Orvis, second Bogardus) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 7:12 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon, Recording Secretary

Dave Connolly, Chairman