**TOWN OF FARMINGTON**

**CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, January 11, 2012**

**356 Main Street, Farmington, NH**

**Committee Members Present:** Dave Connolly, Art LeClair, Kathy Spangler,Richard Ballou and Neil Johnson

**Committee Members Absent:** Scott Kobbe (excused) and Randy Orvis

**Selectmen’s Representative:** Jim Horgan

**Public Present:** NH Forest Ranger Matt Apgar and Laura Beard

**At 6:02pm, Chairman Dave Connolly opened the meeting.**

**1. Review of Minutes:**

***Jim Horgan motioned to accept the minutes of 12-16-11 as amended, 2nd Neil Johnson. Motion carried with all in favor.***

**2. Public Comment:**

Dave commented that he often hears about how good of a job the Commission does and he wanted to pass that along because without all the dedicated members the Commission wouldn’t get anything done. He would like to focus on education for 2012.

**3. Discussion with Forest Ranger Matt Apgar:**

Forest Ranger Matt Apgar explained that he is one of the nine rangers in the state and his job focuses on forest management and control. He explained some of the laws regarding forest management and why they exist. There is no procedure to notify his office of a timber harvest except for when complaints come in and the office likes to be made aware of what is going on. Art asked if he gets copies of the Intent to Cuts and Matt said yes. It was discussed that the Commission has not been getting copies of the Intent to Cuts and they would like to. Jim asked what kind of power the rangers have and Matt explained he has full police power but they typically don’t arrest. Generally if they find an illegal action they issue a court summons and/or fine, though they do have good relationships with most of the loggers. Art asked what the department can do about wheeled vehicles on posted land because there are a lot of atvs going on Blue Job and Little Blue Job Mountains. Matt explained it is difficult to catch the people on the wheeled vehicles but they do put up cameras and stake out those areas to try to catch people breaking the laws. He further explained that the local police department is the most appropriate entity to catch/fine the trespassers.

**4. Moose Mountain Regional Greenways (MMRG):**

**A.** Dave explained that the representatives from MMRG were not available tonight but the public forum is scheduled for April 18, 2012 at the Town Hall. Keith Fletcher will give a presentation on what an easement is, how one goes about putting land into easement and the pros and cons of going so. MMRG will take care of all the media and refreshments but would like the Commission to provide them with a list of landowners in town who have a minimum of 10 acres and near the current conservation projects. Dave also suggested looking into finding other speakers and MMRG would be willing to pay half of the cost. Art suggested maybe having some of the people in town who have put their land in conservation speak about their experience and the Commission agreed this would be a great idea.

**B.** **Monitoring -** Dave explained that MMRG has recently gone to their Board to see about offering monitoring services and they will get back to the Commission when they get a final answer.

**5. Educational Curriculum w/Art and Laura Beard:**

Art stated that he found an amazing amount of environmental/conservation curriculum on the 4-H Mall site under the Cooperative-Extension. He would suggest the Commission think about purchasing some of the items to help. Laura explained that she has a small curriculum on beetles and other bugs and such already. For the cub scout groups the focus should be on erosion, what is conservation, animal habitats, recycling, and leave not trace. Laura then explained that she is an independent contractor that has a contract with the department of agriculture to educate. Dave will contact the scout leader to see what date would work best. The scout pack meetings are the third Wednesday of each month.

***Dave Connolly motioned to move the March meeting to March 7, 2012, 2nd Art LeClair. Motion carried with all in favor.***

**6. Old Business:**

**A. Town Forest Update –** Dave explained he spoke with Randy Tetreault of Norway Plains and he has spoken within the landowner where the boundary line dispute was and they came to a resolution of 30 feet from the center line and Randy will put this on the plan. Mr. Hayes also agreed to the current paperwork and Dave will get the paperwork processed.

**B. Dubois Update –** Due to the weather the log landing was not done until this past Monday. BH Keith told Dave that he has another client who has an abutting property owner that he is working on who would like to use the log landing for their land locked property logging operation off of Hornetown Road. Jim stated that he doesn’t have a problem with it but he would like to see the boulders moved around when they are done so the area can accommodate a few vehicles. Art stated he feels the other party should share in the cost of the log landing and road repairs/updates if they want to use the landing. The Commission agreed that the costs for the repairs should be shared at a minimum and laying out the parking lot after the logging is done would be a fair trade for the use of the landing.

**C. French Update –** Dave explained that while the loggers are at the Dubois property they are going to go on the French property and cut the fingers as previously discussed.

**D. 2012 Budget –** Dave stated that the correct figure for the Commission’s current budget is $4,551 and he will request this again this year from the Budget Committee.

**E. Cameras –** Dave reported that he ordered four new cameras and lock boxes.

**7. New Business:**

**A. MMRG Annual Meeting and Auction –** Art reported that MMRG is holding their annual meeting on February 6th from 6-9pm at the Wolfeboro Inn. There will be a presentation on invasive plants and it would be great if someone from the Commission would be willing to go. He also thought it would be a good idea to bring the Commission’s display board if they would allow it. The Commission asked Laura Beard if she would be willing to go since she is going to join the Commission and she agreed. ***Jim Horgan motioned to authorize the payment of $25 to MMRG for Laura Beard to attend the Annual Meeting as a representative of the Commission, 2nd Kathy Spangler. Motion carried with all in favor.***

**B. BH Keith Invoice –** Dave reviewed the invoice for November and December for a total of $320. Some of the work related to this invoice brought in the $2000 grant that was just received to cut the fingers on the French property. ***Neil Johnson motioned to authorize payment of the BH Keith invoice for $320, 2nd Jim Horgan. Motion carried with all in favor.***

**C. Invoice from Norway Plains –** An invoice in the amount of $425.75 was received from Norway Plains for the work they did to resolve the boundary disputes in the Town Forest. ***Neil Johnson motioned to authorize payment of the Norway Plains invoice, 2nd Jim Horgan. Motion carried with all in favor.***

**D.** Dave reported that there was an accident that broke the leg of the Waldron’s Land sign and he has contacted the Public Works Department for an estimate to repair it so the person’s car insurance can be contacted.

**E. HB 1515-FN-Local –** Dave gave the Commission a copy of the law 79-A:25 because as of July 1, 2012 the funds that currently go into the Land Use Fund would no longer go into. Dave contacted all the state representatives that he is not in favor of this proposed law and why. Dave did receive an email back from Representative Panek stating that he had not researched this particular bill yet but would do so before he voted. ***Jim Horgan motioned to have Dave Connolly send an email to the sponsors of the bill, the representatives, and the State Committee to state the Commission is not in favor and why, 2nd Neil Johnson. Motion carried with all in favor.***

**F.** Art informed the Commission that he hiked up Chesley Mountain with his neighbors last weekend and it got him thinking that the Commission should lead such hikes for the public. Sponsoring events in town would get people out onto our properties, educate them and get them to utilize the great resources we have in town.

**G.** Art reported that he feels there is an issue on Reservoir Road because there is a lot of water running down the hill, causing some serious erosion, killing trees and draining dirt and such into the reservoir. Jim stated the Public Works Director needs to be contacted so he can go out and look at and form an opinion.

**H.** Dave stated that he contacted the City of Rochester to see who monitors there conservation lands and found out it falls on their Public Works department. He then tried to contact other Commissions but is having difficulty finding the appropriate people to contact. Laura offered to ask a Commission member from Strafford what they do.

***At 8:17pm, Neil Johnson motioned to adjourn, 2nd Art LeClair. Motion carried with all in favor.***

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandy Sanger

Recording Secretary

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Chairman, David Connolly