Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting
Wednesday, May 13, 2015

**Commission Members Present:**Dave Connolly, ChairmanRandy Orvis, Vice ChairmanResta DetwilerJerry McCarthy, Selectmen’s Rep. Jacquelin Bissell

**Commission Members Absent:**Laura Bogardus, excusedRose Muise, excused

**Excused:** Richard Ballou

**Others Present:**Residents: Rod Thompson, Carol Chamberlain, Mike ConroyFHS Environmental Sciences Teacher Eric ChamberlainFHS Students: Jonathan Mainzer, Billy Irwin, Nathan D’Amore, Lilly Bunker

**1). Call to Order:**Chairman Connolly called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

**2). Pledge of Allegiance:**All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3). Public Comment:**A). Scruton Road resident Mike Conroy came before the commission to discuss the lack of signage for the trails on Blue Job Mountain. He said people have come to his door or have ended up in the woods behind his house because they are lost and they just can’t be left there. This is a safety issue and sooner or later someone is going to have to be rescued and brought out he said.Chairman Connolly told Conroy that signs for the trails are in progress and explained some of the process involved in obtaining the signs. Connolly said he met with NH Dept. of Resources and Economic Development, Land Management Bureau Administrator Bill Carpenter and Land Agent Bob Spoerl to discuss the composition and placement of the signs for the hiking trails. The DRED officials came up with the wording for 13 signs and the wood shop teacher and students at Farmington High School have been asked to construct them. The goal is to have the signs made by the end of the school year and installed by July he said.Mr. Conroy added that most of the problem seems to be with people coming from the Strafford side and said he would like to see signs installed at all of the major intersections of the trails. He thanked the commission for their time and efforts.

B). Eric Chamberlain expressed his gratitude for being chosen Citizen of the Year by the Conservation Commission. He said he was very surprised and pleased at receiving the award. He added that he doesn’t do things for the recognition, but it is still nice to get a pat on the back now and then.
Chairman Connolly replied that it is the commission’s pleasure to give the award to him. The commission gave out three awards for efforts in conservation, to Mr. Chamberlain, to member Randy Orvis and to Cameron’s Home and Garden Center (Business of the Year). Connolly said the commission would not have the outreach to the high school without him.
Vice Chairman Orvis added that he appreciated everything Mr. Chamberlain has done to steer students to conservation.
At this point, it was announced that Mr. Chamberlain is retiring from teaching at the end of the school year. Members thanked him and wished him well in his retirement.

**4). Review of April 8, 2015 Minutes:
Motion:** (Orvis, second Bissell) to approve the minutes as written passed 5-0.

**5). Review/Acceptance of RFP(s):**Chairman Connolly said the commission sent out Request for Proposals to implement the Forest Management Plan for the Town Forest. He told the members that one bid has been received and asked Vice Chairman Orvis to open it and read the contents. The bid was from forestry consultants BH Keith Associates of Freedom, NH and contained the following information; the background of the project team, the scope of the work, plans to meet with the commission to set a schedule for on-site coordination of the work, schedule site walks with the commission, timber sale and related administrative duties, clean up and seeding, final closeout for the timber tax, habitat improvements, establishment of the kiosks and securing grant funding. The bid also contains information about the hourly charges for certain on-site work, attendance at meetings, office and research fees as well as a 15% commission from the timber sale. Connolly said other people asked questions about the management plan but there was only one bid received. He noted that the commission has worked with this firm before (Dubois and French properties) and said he has full confidence in them if the board wants to go with them.Vice Chairman Orvis noted that the wildlife habitats on both the French and Dubois properties have really improved following their work there. **Motion:** (McCarthy, second Orvis) to award the contract to BH Keith Associates passed 5-0.Chairman Connolly advised the RFP was properly advertised on the town website and in the newspaper. There will be a Public Hearing in June with the company to discuss the plans for the work and inform the abutters he said.

**6). Old Business:***A). Spring Clean Up Report -* Member Detwiler reported that 14 people participated in the clean up held in April and 560 pounds of trash was picked up from town roads. She also thanked the Farmington Police Dept. for their support and participation and the businesses who donated refreshments, Irving, Honey Dew Doughnuts and Subway. Certificates of Appreciation will be given to clean up participants and thank-you letters will be sent to the businesses.

Chairman Connolly also thanked the participants and the businesses. He added that if more people participate next year, more roads could be cleaned. Vice Chairman Orvis said he is conducting his own clean up along River Road. The trash seems to accumulate quickly there he said.
*B). Blue Job Trail Signs-* Chairman Connolly noted this issue was discussed earlier in the meeting and added that DRED will also provide the tools and sign posts and it is expected to take three days to install the signs. Vice Chairman Orvis suggested that someone or a group from Strafford should get involved in the installation as half of the trails are in their town.
*C). French Trail Project-* Vice Chairman Orvis said he has not heard back from the Boy Scouts regarding help in installing bridges at several crossings on the French property. He said that he is at a loss as to where to turn for help building the bridges. Chairman Connolly said he will try once again to obtain a response from the troop, but if the commission doesn’t hear from them in one week, they will have to move to Plan B. Orvis noted that there is some level of difficulty at each of the crossings which include bog crossings, stream crossing and one span which will be about 90 feet long. Some of the crossings are located at the other side of the property and are accessible by snow mobile trails.
Chairman Connolly said he would contact the NH Snow Mobile Association to see if they are aware of a group or organization that may be interested in helping with the project.
*D). French/Dubois Monitoring-* Chairman Connolly said the NH Fish and Game Dept. holds the easements to the properties and conducts a yearly walk of the sites to monitor their condition. This year’s walk will be conducted on Tuesday, May 19 at 8 a.m. at the French property site. Connolly said he will participate in the walk along with Emily Lord from the NH Association of Conservation Commissions. He advised anyone planning to attend bring bug repellant, hiking shoes and fluorescent clothing as it is turkey hunting season.
*E). Any Other Old Business-* None

**7). New Business:***A). Hay Day*- Chairman Connolly spoke about the commission’s participation in the Hay Day celebration over the last four years. Displays have included the Bug Lady, the Skull and Furs Kit, and presentations from various groups such as the Moose Mountain Regional Greenways, Strafford River Conservancy, Audubon Society and the NH Fish and Game Dept. He asked the commission members if they would like to participate in this year’s event. Consensus of the commission was to continue their participation in Hay Day. Connolly noted that in past years, Taylor Rental has provided the 10’ x 10’ canopies but no longer carries that size canopy. Members were asked to see if they can find another provider for cover for the booth space. Connolly also told the commission that the Recreation Dept. charges the commission for rental of the spaces as it is a prime location which could be rented to a vendor. Each space costs $25 and the commission rents three spaces each year. The display would run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and must be set up by 8 a.m. on Hay Day he said.  **Motion:** (Detwiler, second Orvis) to expend $75 for the booth rental space fee passed 5-0. *B). Leadership in Me-* Members received copies of a flyer created by students from the Valley View Community School to promote Leadership Day at the school. The event showcases the students’ leadership skills and will be held on May 27, 2015 beginning at 8:45 a.m. Members were encouraged to attend and asked to RSVP if they plan to attend.

*C). Dubois Map-* Chairman Connolly reminded members that at the last meeting, Selectman McCarthy asked if there was a map of the Dubois property. Resident Rod Thompson provided a map of the property that will be placed in a kiosk at the site. Members then discussed possible additions to the map. Thompson suggested that he add that the owner of the property is the town of Farmington as some people are not aware of this. Thompson also suggested an arrow be placed on the map stating “You are here” to help users navigate the map. Thompson will make the additions and deliver the map to Chairman Connolly when it is completed.
*D). Planning Board Support-* Chairman Connolly reported his attendance at a recent Planning Board meeting where the board asked for the support of the Conservation Commission on the issue of hiring a full time Planner. Vice Chairman Orvis said he attended a Selectmen’s meeting where a similar conversation was held and voiced his personal support for a full time Planner. He told Selectmen how the lack of a full time Planner has affected his business as he is unable to get timely answers to questions or bill some of his clients on time.
Member Bissell asked what is the duty of the Planning Board. Orvis said the Planning Board develops the Master Plan to help the town plan for growth, writes land use ordinances, reviews applications and approves or disapproves them. The Planner is helpful to the Planning Board in these matters and helps keep them from “fumbling around” at meetings he said.
Connolly said as volunteer board members with full time jobs, members have limited time to touch base with the Planning Dept. The Conservation Commission relies on the Planning Board and the Planning Board relies on the Planning Dept. he said.
Orvis then asked if the members supported the Planning Board request to hire a full time Planner and allow Chairman Connolly to represent them at the Board of Selectmen’s meeting on May 18. Consensus of the commission showed they support the request and being represented by their Chairman.
*E). Overlay Maps-* Chairman Connolly pointed out that the current edition of the town’s base maps with overlays is out of date. Five properties need to be added to the map to bring it up to date with current property configurations of the town. Connolly said he contacted Strafford County Regional Planning Commission for an estimate to purchase new maps. Two copies of an updated map would cost $250. **Motion:** (McCarthy, second Orvis) to expend $250 to purchase two new overlay maps passed 5-0.
*F). Any Other New Business-*
*Rossi Property*-Vice Chairman Orvis asked the status of the Rossi property. Chairman Connolly said he thinks the property is under the ownership of the town but is not under control of the Conservation Commission. The three acre property abuts the Peasley brickyard lot, has frontage on River Road and the river and is not developable. The parcel has potential for handicapped access to the river and was intended for conservation use. Chairman Connolly said he will check on the status of the property with the Town Clerk.
*Cameron’s Land Swap*-Chairman Connolly asked Selectman McCarthy for the status of the property swap between the Town and Cameron’s Home and Garden Center. Selectmen McCarthy said he does not the current status but will find out and report back to commission.

**8). FYI:***A).Protecting the Source workshop-* Chairman Connolly reported receipt of notice of a workshop regarding protecting water quality and conserving land in the Salmon Falls watershed. The workshop is scheduled for June 2, 2015 at the Spring Hill Lodge in South Berwick, Maine from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The cost to attend is $30.*B). Intent to Cut Notice-* Vice Chairman Orvis reported notice of intent to cut for tax map R-18 Lot 3 for the purpose of timber harvesting on the 90 acre property located on Chestnut Hill Road.*C). Tuesday, May 19, 2015-* walk of the French property at 8 a.m.

**9). June Meeting Dates:***A). June 10, 2015-* Conservation Commission meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the Municipal Office Building. There will be a Public Hearing to discuss the implementation of the Town Forest management with BH Keith Associates.

**10). Any Other Business:** None

**11). Adjournment:
Motion:** (Orvis, second McCarthy) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 7:50 p.m.

Respectively submitted,
Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary