Town of Farmington
Conservation Commission Meeting
Wednesday, December 9, 2015

**Commission Members Present:**
Dave Connolly, Chairman
Randy Orvis, Vice Chairman
Laura Bogardus
Resta Detwiler
Jackie Bissell

**Commission Members Absent:**Rose Muise
Richard Ballou, excused

**Others Present:**Rod Thompson, resident
Jeremy Lougee, SELT

**1). Call to Order:**Chairman Connolly called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

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

**3). Public Comment:** None.

**4). SELT/Jeremy Lougee:***A). Smith Property-* SELT Conservation Project Manager Jeremy Lougee told the commission that following Easement Stewardship Director Debbie Goard’s discussion at the previous meeting, the review of the features and conditions at the site were completed. He explained that the property was previously under the stewardship of the Strafford Rivers Conservancy and a baseline report was not completed. Now the two groups have merged and the task was completed by SELT he said. He presented the report to the commission and asked Chairman Connolly to initial and sign the document and then forward it to the Board of Selectmen for their signatures and to have it notarized.
**Motion:** (Orvis, second Detwiler) to accept the document as presented passed 5-0.
**Motion:** (Bogardus, second Orvis) to allow Chairman Connolly to sign the report passed 5-0.
Chairman Connolly said he will sign the report and forward it to Selectmen.
Chairman Connolly then told Mr. Lougee that the Smith’s were unwilling to pay for the purchase and installation of a Knox box for the property gate and he had asked Ms. Goard to find out if that was something that could be funded by SELT. Lougee said he contact her and obtain an answer.
*B). Ten Rod Road (Tax Map R30, Lot 4) -* Mr. Lougee also provided a handout and presentation on the proposed Hills Farm Conservation Project. The owner of the 52 acre parcel plans to sell milk products and should be ready to start selling them in about a year he said. The Rattlesnake River runs through the property, it is located in the core area of the NH Coastal Plan and the owner is looking to develop a conservation easement for the property to prevent it from being developed after he is gone Lougee said. Discussion included the historic Town Pound is located there, the parcel contains prime farm land with high quality soils, contains wildlife habitats, how the easement costs would be funded, the owner is a licensed dairy operator, the plan compliments the local food movement and getting the town engaged in the plan. Lougee said the next step would be to obtain an appraisal for the land to determine the value of the easement and the eligibility for federal and state funding. He added there is a program to help fund the appraisal but the money would not be available until next fall.
Chairman Connolly said the commission is interested in the project and invited Mr. Lougee to return to the commission with a finalized plan including costs and potential funding sources. Mr. Lougee said that if approved, SELT would be the primary easement holder for the property so the proposal must also be reviewed by that board. He said he will speak to the board and then invite Mr. Hill to come before the Conservation Commission to discuss his plans.
Chairman Connolly said the commission will need to post and hold a Public Hearing on the plan and then vote on whether to move ahead with the proposal. If approved by the Commission the proposal will then go before the Board of Selectmen for their approval he said.
*C). Aiken Road (Tax Map R58, Lot 10) -*  Mr. Lougee told members that the Town Clerk referred the property owner to SELT for assistance in preserving the 170 acre parcel. The owner raises and sells chickens and perennials and wants to become a commercial operation. He said the property owner’s mother wished to preserve the property in the name of his deceased father but noted that he has been offered $1 million to sell the parcel. SELT may partner with the town for this project he said.

**Motion:** (Bissell, second Detwiler) to take a five minute recess passed unanimously at 6:50 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 7 p.m.

**5). Old Business:***A). Bylaws Changes Submissions*- Chairman Connolly asked members if they wished to vote on the suggested changes to the commission bylaws or wait until next month. Discussion included:
Retraction of “pursuant to conditions set forth elsewhere in Article IX” in Article IX:B 2
The previous two high school students appointed as non-voting members of the commission were appointed “illegally” as the current bylaw (Article IXA:3) only allows one high school student to be considered for a one year non-voting membership.
**Motion:** (Bissell, second Detwiler) to approve the bylaw change to up to two high school students chosen by the Farmington High School faculty and approved by the Board of Selectmen as non-voting commission members for a term of one year passed 5-0.
Member attendance is discussed in Article IX: B, 2b and Article XII: C, paragraph 4 of the bylaws.
**Motion:** (Orvis, second Bissell) to remove Article XII: C, paragraph 4 passed 5-0.
Chairman Connolly said he will rewrite the bylaws and include a signature page and return it for review. Following members approval he will forward them to Selectmen for their approval he said.
*B). Aquifer Update/Resta*- Member Detwiler said the town attorney advised the name of the proposed zoning ordinance update be changed to Groundwater Protection Overlay District to present a more accurate description of its intentions. She added the article is ready to go to Town Meeting for consideration by voters and will be posted on the town website and at the Municipal Building.
*C). School Outreach/Resta*- Ms. Detwiler said she and member Jackie Bissell met with FHS science teachers and Guidance Counselors regarding a plan to institute a recycling program at the high school. She said they plan to make a presentation to students during the first week of February, obtain recycling bins and figure out the logistics of making the program work. Honor Society members plan to get involved in the program and have a Power Point presentation planned. Discussion included focusing on getting information to students, deciding on whether to get each classroom to recycle or to use a common area for recycling, recycling exists in the cafeteria, fundraising for the cost of recycling bins, not using cardboard boxes and finding ways to get the word out about the program. The next meeting with the FHS advisers is set for Jan. 13 she said.
Chairman Connolly suggested the members check with Keep NH Beautiful on Route 4 in Chichester as a possible source of recycling bins for the project. He then asked about the status of program at the Henry Wilson and Valley View Schools. Ms. Detwiler said a meeting has been scheduled with representatives of the Henry Wilson School but she has yet to hear back from anyone at Valley View.
*D). Property Updates*- Chairman Connolly said there were no updates received for the Town Forest, Ronci, French or Dubois properties. He said he will check with BH Keith for information on the timber harvest, etc. after the holidays.
*E). CC Mixer Report*- Chairman Connolly reported on the results of the Conservation Commission/Moose Mountain Regional Greenways Mixer held on Dec.3 at the American Legion Hall in Farmington. He expressed his thanks to Gary Mosher and said the event had a full house with several informative speakers and presentations. Members agreed and also commented on the abundance of good food.
*F). Any Other Old Business-* None.

**6). New Business:***A). Conservationist of the Year*- The award to a person, organization or business that has shown significant interest in conservation will be presented at the Annual Town Meeting in March. Chairman Connolly asked the members to consider nominations and said they will choose the recipient at the February meeting.
*B). Arbor Day*- Chairman Connolly said Arbor Day will be celebrated on Friday, April 29, 2016. He asked members for suggestions for possible activities to commemorate the day which was begun to celebrate the importance of trees. Discussion included to whom to donate trees to, previous tree donations include the Farmington Child Care Center, Valley View School, the Municipal Building and Fernald Park. Suggestions for new activities included visiting the trees previously donated for an update on their condition and planting a row of trees between High Street and Route 11 to help muffle traffic noise. Chairman Connolly said the commission will discuss the matter further at the next meeting.
*C). Earth Day*- Ms. Detwiler said she is attempting to get more involvement in the annual trash pick- up to be held on April 22, 2016. She will compose a letter to be sent to local organizations and businesses seeking their involvement so that more areas in town can be included in the clean-up.
*D). Any Other New Business*- Chairman Connolly told members Selectmen requested a breakdown of their budget for 2016. The breakdown will include a narrative describing what is needed by the committee, what was expended this year and what they expect to spend next year. He said he may be requested to go before Selectmen on Dec.21 and asked members to attend the Selectmen’s meeting and help support the budget request.

**7). Review of Minutes:
Nov. 11, 2015-** Page 1, Item 4; amend to read the Smiths are not willing to pay for the Knox Box for the gate. Add the word “is” to the last sentence to read “He asked if this is…..Page 2, Item 6 C-Change “Minor” impact to “Minimum” impact.
**Motion**: (Bogardus, second Detwiler) to accept the minutes as amended passed 5-0.

**8). BHK Invoice**:
Chairman Connolly reported receipt of two invoices regarding work done at the French property from BH Keith.
**Motion:** (Orvis, second Bissell) to pay $180 to BH Keith for wildlife area opening and trail work passed 5-0
**Motion:** (Orvis, second Detwiler) to pay $75 to BH Keith for follow up site inspection of the French property woodcock area passed 5-0.

**9). F.Y.I.:**Chairman Connolly reported that the bank restoration project at St. Peter’s Church has been completed. He has received the post construction monitoring report from the Dept. of Environmental Services who reported the work is satisfactory and no remedial measures are needed. The next inspection of the area will be conducted at the end of the 2016 growing season he said.

**10). Next Meeting:**
The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 13, 2016.

**11). Any Other Business:**
Chairman Connolly wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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

Respectively submitted
Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary