

Fremont Conservation Commission
Fremont Town Hall
Fremont, NH

April 4, 2016
7:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Present: Chairman Bill Knee, members Patricia deBeer and Leo Danjou, Open Space members Denise Howland, and Sam Harris, and Recording Secretary Casey Wolfe

This meeting was live broadcast on FCTV channel 22.

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Knee called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Knee introduced Casey to the Commission who is the new Planning and Land Use Administrator. She will also be the new Recording Secretary for the Commission.

Mr. Knee also introduced Leo Danjou, a new prospective member/alternate, to the Commission.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 7, 2016

Mr. Knee asked the Commission if anyone had any changes that they wanted to make to the minutes. He tabled approval of the minutes for the next meeting as a quorum of members is not present.

IV. CONSERVATION COMMISSION INFORMATION

A. TREASURER’S CC ACCOUNT REPORT - no new report available this month.

B. SMITH TRAIL UPDATE

Mr. Knee invited Mr. Howland and Mr. Harris (representing Open Space) to the table. Mr. Howland showed the Commission a map of the proposed trail. Open Space has begun work on the new Smith Trail. They started on the Eastern end where the Forest Loop trail and Woodland Tail intersect and worked North to clear a path from the eastern water crossing, heading towards Garrison boundary. That leg is about 250’.

Mr. Knee explained that to create this trail, we have been working in partnership with Southeast Land Trust (SELT) and that their main mission is making sure there is optimal habitat conditions for wildlife. Mr. Knee met with Phil Auger (from SELT)

on March 31st to look at the western portion of the proposed Smith Trail. Mr. Knee was happy to report that Mr. Auger felt favorable about the trail going onto SELT property and that he would bring it up with the SELT Board. The one firm stipulation is that he lay out the trail on SELT property. Also, he would be happy to help us with the trail on Town Forest land. He thought that if both a SELT work crew and a Town work crew were to work together, that the trail could be done quickly. Open Space can continue to work on the proposed trail from the Eastern end, to the opening in the rock wall, however, they should not do any work on the Western End.

Mr. Howland and Mr. Harris welcome Mr. Auger's input on these trails. Mr. Knee brought up Mr. Auger's strong aversion to ATV's. There was discussion about ways to prevent ATV's from accessing the trail. There was also discussion about the kind of signage and blazes that would be used on the trail. Mr. Howland brought some different kinds of signs to the meeting and went over the costs. Mr. Knee and Mr. Howland talked about what color the blazes should be. It was suggested that one color could be used on the Fremont side, and that another color could be used on the SELT side. Mr. Knee felt that Mr. Auger should be asked about this.

There was some discussion about maps. Mr. Howland suggested having one kiosk at the intersection of South Garrison and Smith Trail. This lead to a discussion about locks and keys for kiosks around town. It was decided that all of the kiosks should have the same combination.

Mr. Howland and Mr. Harris left the meeting at 8:00.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

- A. Rockingham County Conservation District 2016 Annual Meeting Wednesday, April 20 at the Brentwood Community Center, First Floor. Cost \$20 per person. Note: attendance will have to be out-of-pocket as the Commission has no budget again this year.
- B. A notification from The Stewardship Network: New England of Training Guides available as free downloads at NewEngland.stewardshipnetwork.org/training-guides. Available at this time are training guides on "How to Lead a Nature Walk", "How to Monitor Conservation Easements", and "Outdoor Skills for Conservation Volunteers".

Mr. Danjou volunteered to download and print the "How to Monitor Conservation Easements" PDF and incorporate it into a notebook/file that also contains all the other easement materials specific to this Town - a single resource to go to for information pertaining to easements.

- C. LRAC Public Outreach Programs
Ms. deBeer will forward the pdf for this to Ms. Wolfe so that she can forward it to others.

VI. OTHER: The Members will also hear any other business to come before the Commission.

A. 2016 Town Meeting Voting

1. BAD NEWS - The proposed Town Budget didn't pass so we are working with the default budget. That means the Conservation Commission doesn't have any funding. For the second consecutive year, there are no monies available for training, workshops, organization memberships, etc.
2. GOOD NEWS – The Beede Spaulding Conservation Land has been accepted as Town Forest. A Town Ordinance sign needs to be put in the Cooperage Forest kiosks. There is no need to purchase any more signs for this purpose.

B. Past Selectmen, Leon Holmes, Sr., requests to use Conservation Commission funds to upgrade the turn-around at the end of Andreski Drive. Mr. Homes was thinking that Current Use funds could be used to pave the turn-around and create parking for the Town Forest. As Ms. O'Brien stated at the last meeting, the Current Use Account cannot be used for this purpose; it can only be used for acquisition of conservation land and conservation easements. We have no way of legally funding the request as all of the Commission's accounts are either already dedicated and therefore spent or not able to be used for this purpose.

C. NH Association of Conservation Commissions Membership dues of \$333 are due in April 2016. Because the Town did not vote in the proposed budget, the Conservation Commission doesn't have a way of paying the dues. Mr. Knee felt that there are two options: 1. Ask the Town Administrator if she can find the monies for membership; 2. Write the NHACC and let them know we don't have any budget for the second year in a row and therefore cannot pay the membership dues this year. Ms. Wolfe is going to make sure the Town Administrator sees the invoice.

D. Interpretive Trail in Memory of Aja Mahoney.

Mr. Knee discussed using the monies Ms. Mahoney bequeathed the Commission with Phil Auger for an Interpretive Trail that would honor her memory as a life-long elementary teacher and conservationist. He will contact Fred Borman, our County Forester. He made a few recommendations and gave me a few names of other local Conservation Commission Chairs to contact. Contacting the head of The Stewardship Network: New England for suggestions was also suggested.

Mr. Knee explained to the Commission that he drafted a Primary Theme for the Interpretive Trail. This theme includes valuing Spruce Swamp as a unique and special natural resource. He pitched the idea of developing a "Quest" that would encourage the explorations of all the various habitats in our Town Forests. A "Quest", as Mr. Knee explained, is similar to a treasure hunt. There would be clues that would guide families and children to the next habitat. Bequeathed monies would be used to develop and print "Spruce Swamp and it's Neighboring Habitats" Interpretive Trail information, waterproof containers for signing in at various habitats, unique stamps for notebooks, ink pads, tree ID tags, etc. Mr. Knee added

that the trail would have to be monitored by volunteers during the time period the interpretive trail is open.

Mr. Knee gave an example about what a clue might sound like. The idea is that the clues teach about the natural surroundings. Ms. deBeer explained that we will have to rely on people who have designed these “Quests” in the past to make sure it is well done. There was some discussion about the stamps, boxes, and paper that would be used. Mr. Danjou mentioned that he was considering making a video of the trails, and that it would be a good way to advertise the “Quest” on FCTV. Ms. deBeer brought up making sure the language on the clues is age-appropriate so that young children can easily follow along.

I. NEXT MEETING DATE: May 2, 2016

II. ADJOURNMENT – Mr. Knee adjourned the meeting at 8:53.

Action items:

Mr. Danjou needs to be sworn in as a Conservation Commission member