

Fremont Conservation Commission
Fremont Library
Fremont, NH

August 7, 2017

7:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Approved September 11, 2017

Present: Chair Leanne Miner, Vice Chair Bill Knee, Member Cindy Crane, Member Leo Danjou, and Land Use Administrative Assistant Casey Wolfe

Also Present : John Starr, Duane Hyde

A. CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Miner called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. After a few amendments, Mr. Knee made a motion to approve the minutes of June 5, 2017. Ms. Crane seconded the motion with all in favor. Ms. Crane made a motion to approve the non-public minutes of June 5, 2017. Mr. Knee seconded the motion with all in favor. Mr. Knee made a motion to approve the special meeting minutes of July 16, 2017. Mr. Danjou seconded the motion with all in favor.

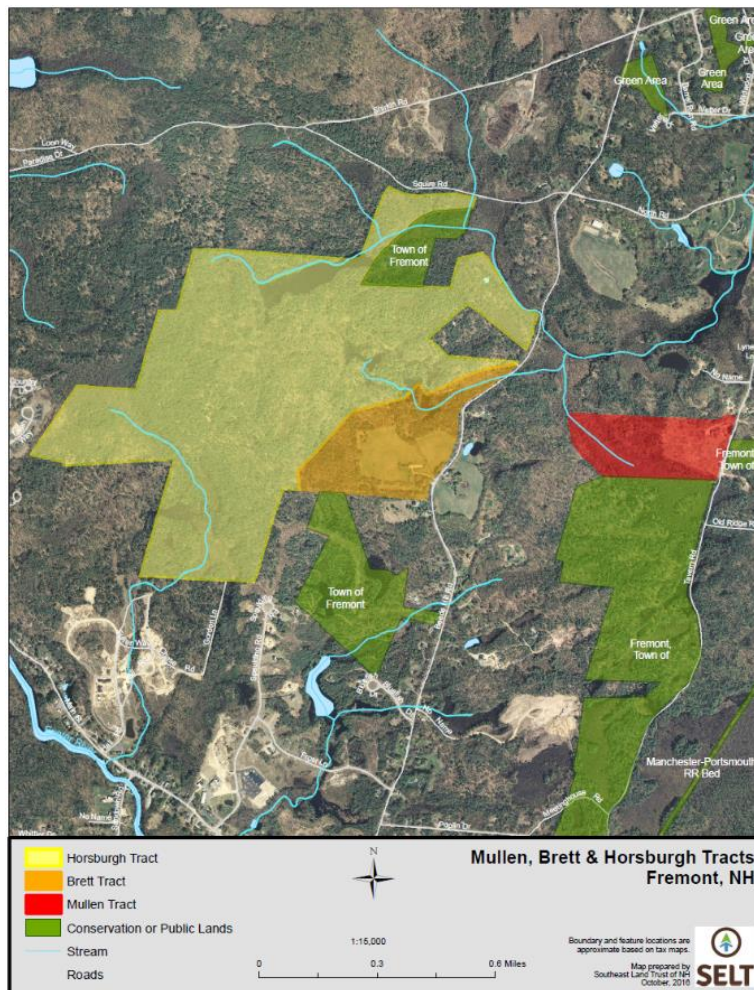
C. John Starr of 55 Riverside Drive was there to discuss the dam in Brentwood near the southeast corner of town. He informed the Commission that the owner is trying to divest himself of the dam. The gate on the dam is broken. It is located three or four bends up the river from where Mr. Starr lives. Mr. Starr asked the Commission how they feel about the project. Mr. Knee stated that in New Hampshire Conservation Commissions are strictly advisory and do not have any authority. Mr. Starr informed the Commission that there has been a meeting called by the owner of the dam to discuss this matter and that a report on the dam should be available by tomorrow. Mr. Starr was under the impression that the Town Administrator will put the report on the town website.

Mr. Knee stated that the Department of Environmental Services is responsible for interpreting the State's RSA's. He also stated that the Exeter River Advisory Council meets regularly and that Mr. Starr should go to them. If there were endangered species involved, the Commission could have more to sink their teeth into. Mr. Starr felt that there should be evidence that some endangered species are threatened. Ms. Miner stated that the Conservation Commission does not stand anywhere on this issue at the time because of lack of information. Ms. Crane agreed that the Commission needs more information. She also stated that there is an ecological value to free-flowing rivers and wetlands.

Mr. Starr felt that the dam bureau hasn't been helpful and believes that the bureau currently has the dam designated as low hazard. Mr. Danjou asked how old the dam was and Mr. Starr estimated that it could be a 100 year old dam. Mr. Duane Hyde informed Mr. Starr that a species list is kept by NH Fish and Game. There was a discussion of various turtle species in Fremont. Ms. Crane mentioned that the Blanding's turtle is a species of concern in Fremont. Mr. Starr left at 7:34 pm.

D. CONSERVATION

Southeast Land Trust (SELT) Duane Hyde to discuss interest and funding options for land conservation adjacent to the Oak Ridge Town Forest that is known to have sensitive habitat.



1. Mr. Duane Hyde updated the Commission on the status of the Horsburgh property. This 343 acre property is currently under agreement with the Natural Resource Conservation Service. This organization would hold a Wetlands Reserve Easement and then they would donate the property to the Southeast Land Trust. A lot would need to be carved out for the house. The project was originally supposed to close out this month, however, the contracting for the boundary survey took a long time. Eric. C Mitchell Associates was hired for the job. The project should be completed sometime in early 2018. There is also the abutting 10-acre Town of Fremont-owned piece question. Mr. Knee stated that a representative from SELT would mostly likely be asked to go to the Board of Selectmen to explain how the piece might be conveyed to Southeast Land Trust.
2. Mr. Hyde also talked to the Commission about the Brett property. Mr. Hyde has been working with Nick, the owner of the property, to get the property conserved. Mr. Hyde mentioned the Blanding's Turtle Reserve. Blanding's turtles use upland and

wetland habitats, they do not breed until they are 17, and there are known occurrences of this species on this lot. There is also the Agricultural Land Easement program. This program pays for 50% of the value of the easement. While the soils on this property are good (but not great), Mr. Hyde felt that this property could compete pretty well for these funds. He wanted to know if the Town was interested in contributing the funds for an appraisal for a conservation easement. Mr. Knee explained that the Town normally has a contingency that the Town would pay for half of the appraisal and the property owner the other half. If the project does not succeed, then the property owner will reimburse the Town for their half of the cost of the appraisal, and if the project goes through then the Town will reimburse the owner their half of the appraisal. Mr. Hyde also mentioned the Great Bay Research Protection Partnership, however, this project is likely outside of their scope. Ms. Miner felt that the best practice is to reach out to realtors that will provide the best quote to obtain an appraisal so the Town is prepared to take the next steps in the process. Mr. Hyde wants to help the Town spell out the perimeters for the appraisal. Doing this could be relatively affordable. There is a three and half acre exclusion area. The boundaries need to be drawn in a way so that this project can score the highest. Mr. Knee said that once they have a figure they will contact the Town Administrator. Mr. Knee expressed his full support of the project.

3. Finally, Mr. Hyde updated the Commission about the 37 acre lot on Tavern Road owned by Jack Mullen. There is a financial target Mr. Mullen is trying to hit selling the property. Mr. Mullen could perhaps develop part of the property. The Natural Resource Conservation Service would only pay a strict per-acre value and to score high enough it would have to be the whole lot. The money that Mr. Mullen wants for the property is actually reasonable. Mr. Hyde felt that we can get at least half way to his desired amount with the wetlands program. Perhaps the Town could pay for the other half and add it to the Town Forest. The Commission decided to go into non-public session to review details.

E. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

Per RSA 91-A:3, Ms. Miner made a motion to go into nonpublic session to discuss land acquisition. Mr. Knee seconded the motion. There was a roll call vote.

Mr. Knee made a motion to leave nonpublic session and to seal the minutes. Ms. Leanne seconded the motion with all in favor.

F. BUDGET

1. Ms. Wolfe informed the Commission that the proposed budget for 2018 is due soon. The Commission went through each line item of the budget proposal and discussed each item. Ms. Miner made a motion to send this version of the proposed budget to the Town Administrator. Mr. Danjou seconded the motion. The motion passed.

G. COMMENT SHEETS

1. Scribner Road Variance Request
 - a. Mr. Danjou reported that he went to the ZBA site walk pertaining to this variance request. The applicant would like to build his garage within the wetland setback. At the site walk, Mr. Danjou went through the brush but only saw a ditch for the culvert. The land was dry. Mr. Knee did not see a

problem with this variance request. This wetland seems to have little ecological value; therefore, the Commission has no objection to the variance request.

2. Altaeros Energies Variance Request

- a. Ms. Wolfe presented to the Commission a variance request application for a 70-foot hanger. The applicant is seeking relief from the Town's 35-foot height limit. This application will be followed by a site plan application for the Planning Board. The Commission had no comments on the variance request application; however, they would like to comment on the site plan application once it is submitted.

H. OPEN SPACE UPDATES

1. The Open Space meeting was held on August 1, 2017. See highlights to be discussed at the next Conservation Commission meeting below:
 - a. Open Space feedback on interpretive trail - see Open Space minutes
 - b. Sam, Rich and Dennis cleared downed trees in Oak Ridge South.
 - c. Barred Owl East blazing to resume after weather changes.
 - d. MAPS - Need something for Barred Owl.
 - e. CC and Open Space web pages woefully out of date!
 - f. Does Trail Finder offer help with maps and our web pages - Sam and Dennis to investigate with Pat.
 - g. Fall Foliage hikes - THREE - looking for feedback on dates and locations, though we have three spots in mind.
 - h. B52 hike - SELT connection via Garrison?
 - i. Snow Shoe Hike - Camp Nasty!
 - j. Oak Ridge North post 3 water crossing - Will need substantial bridging if we ever want to restore this trail. Related to this, is there any money left for town forest maintenance projects?
 - k. OS needs a PR person; current active membership is all WOODS people.
 - l. Misc questions - Did Charlie ever finish updating Town Forest Management report? When will the next logging take place?

I. ADJOURNMENT

1. Mr. Danjou made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 pm. Mr. Knee seconded the motion with all in favor.

J. Next Meeting: September 11, 2017

Respectfully Submitted,

Casey Wolfe
Land Use Administrative Assistant