

Fremont Conservation Commission
Fremont Town Hall
Fremont, NH

In Attendance: Chair Leanne Miner; Vice-Chair Bill Knee, Members Cindy Crane, Pat deBeer and Selectmen's Clerk Kathy Clement.

Guests: Duane Hyde – SELT, Danielle McRae, Cynthia McRae, Jack Karcz Planning Board member, Dennis Howland Open Space member.

- A. CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Miner called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.
- B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The committee reviewed the minutes of April 1, 2019. Mr. Knee moved to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Miner seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous 4-0.
- C. REPORT OF OFFICERS, BOARDS, COMMITTEES – Member Business
 - 1. Administration – Assignment of Officers – No Discussion
 - 2. Calendar of Events and Announcements
 - a. LRAC – Hosting Well Water Contaminants and Safety Presentation at the Durham Public Library on May 21st
 - b. June 7 Forest Management Training – UNH Cooperative Extension will hold their training in our forest. This will be a great place to have their training with an older Forest Management cut to compare to one that is being done presently. (Friday)
 - 3. Event Feedback
 - a. April 6 Saving Special Places – Prospect Mountain High School, Alton NH.
 - b. April 16 - Transforming Conservation Properties Agricultural Possibilities and Stewardship. Ms. Miner reported that there was a lot of great information. She did mention that she found it interesting that only 4% of the food consumed in New Hampshire comes from New Hampshire.
 - c. April 28 – B52 Hike Mr. Howland reported that the hike went well and that there were 19 people that went on the hike and 15 were new faces, which is very exciting to see more interest in these events.
 - d. May 4, 2019 Litter-Free Fremont Clean Up and Community Cookout Ms. Miner said the event went great and she noticed that there was a lot of residents talking and asking questions from the members of the different committees. Shout out to Peppermint Ponies for their help at the Litter-Free Fremont Clean Up.
- D. CONSERVATION
 - 1. Duane Hyde, Land Conservation Director from SELT came before the committee to give an update on the different projects completed and future projects. SELT has been working for the last several years with landowners on the Brown Brook/Spruce Swamp area and now owns the 344 acre “Brown Brook Forest” formerly owned by the Horsburghs. SELT is also currently under agreement to acquire a 33.4-acre

portion of the Mullen property on Tavern Road abutting the Town forest. Mr. Hyde said that the property should close this summer and it also abuts Town forest property. As this is going through the approval process, they have done all due diligence and are ready to go forward. SELT is also working with the McRae's on their property between the Mullen and Horsburgh properties. Horsburgh was an outright fee acquisition.

While working on the above projects they have also been working with the Bretts on a two-part project on Beede Hill Road. First is SELT has applied to NRCS Agricultural Land Easement program to fund a conservation easement for approximately 29.5 acres. Second is the Bretts have submitted an application to NRCS Wetlands Reserve Easement Program to conserve approximately 20 acres along the Brown Brook tributary. The Bretts will keep about 3 acres around the house and barns. Mr. Hyde explained there are lots of reasons to conserve the Brett property. It has prime wetlands, it is within DES High Priority Water Supply Lands and within the Blackrocks Village well head protection area, it has a High Transmissivity Aquifer, and many streams on the property. It is identified by the Town as a natural resource property scenic and agricultural. Also, within the conservation plan for the Blanding's endangered turtle. The NH Fish & Game has identified this property as Highest Ranked Habitat in Biological Region. Mr. Hyde submitted a report to the committee reviewing all the information for the Brett project. They are requesting the Town contribute \$150,000 which would be about 45% of the total project cost. This would also make SELT the main holder and the Town an Executory Interest Holder in the ALE conservation easement. There is only a handful of applicants so far for the new farm bill that was signed in December and they only had a short window to get the programs together. Mr. Hyde recommends applying soon to get the funding. This program will fund 50% of the project. Mr. Hyde broke down the revenues needed for this project, NRCS ALE \$123,750 Mooseplate Program \$11,703 Fremont Conservation Fund \$150,000 Landowner Bargain Sale \$30,500 (12%) and Great Bay \$15,000. The appraisal was done but will be redone as the date gets closer. If the contingency is not used it will be deducted from the amount of money requested from the Town. All of this will have zero tax impact on the Town. SELT has acquired about \$2,000,210 worth of properties in recent years in Fremont and this is the first project that they have asked to have the Town contribute. This is currently a hay farm. This is a really important farming usage. Most through lease or hand shake to allow them to use it. This could become a more active piece of property. This is agriculture and tends to move with the market. They do not require the property to be farmed but they have the right to farm it. Forests follow forest plans. The Bretts want to keep the land in agriculture usage down the line. If someone is not interested in farming, then they will usually look for a local farmer to use the land. Agriculture easements does not allow any other use. Mr. Hyde will supply the committee with a template for farm easements. The timing to be expected would be now from NRCS by August, and if not selected he is optimistic they would get a signed award a few months later. This project would be done end of 2020 or early 2021 if they knew before approval from NRCS that the Town would approve this. SELT is also working with the McRae's to conserve land,

they will not be looking for money from Town. There will be no tax impact and will come out of funds already available.

Mr. Howland suggested a hand shake with SELT in connection to the trail system being joined. Mr. Howland also questioned that SELT has not finished the projects that they have started. Mr. Hyde does not work on that but will follow up at with the correct people. He stated that they are back logged due to project issues. Ms. Miner mentioned the letter received from SCA regarding interns that will come to work on town forest projects at no charge. Mr. Howland also mentioned that the trail system needs to be kept clean as this is something that he is personally doing. Mr. Knee made a motion that the Conservation Commission is in favor of Mr. Hyde moving forward with the project pending the outcome of third-party rights and funding from NRCS. Ms. Miner seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous 4-0. SELT will have site walks and will notify the committee as to when. Also, some Black Rocks Village residents have been going on a lot of the hikes with Open Space.

Ms. deBeer mentioned Cooperage Forest and asked if SELT would be interested in holding an easement. Mr. Hyde said that they work with a lot of towns and he would like to investigate this property and would like to talk about it. Trail planning will not start until next year. The Town can apply for grants. He will talk to the committee later about this process. Partnership funding will be late in the process. Moose plate would be applied for next year. The committee thanked Mr. Hyde. He left at 7:25 pm.

E. REPORT FROM OPEN SPACE

1. Depot Trail – Mr. Howland reported that they are working on extending the Depot Trail. Ms. Miner saw the work at the Cookout and said it looks great.
2. Tavern Road – mud holes maintenance
3. Trail map updates for kiosk - Mr. Howland stated that Ms. deBeer has been doing a lot of work on updating the maps and he would like to get the maps printed as soon as she is done. He was quoted about \$300.00 for the maps, Oak Ridge North, Oak Ridge South and Glen Oaks all 24"x30" ink on plastic and 5 copies of 11x17 town map to go in kiosks. When Ms. DeBeer is done with the maps he will distribute to the committee for review. He would like to have everything printed at the same time. Mr. Knee made a motion to spent up to \$300.00 on printing maps from the operating budget under document purchases. Ms. Crane seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous 4-0.
4. Mr. Howland also mentioned that the site walk for the variance on South Road was canceled and the committee will not be able to sign off on the variance for the driveway until there is a site walk. The Zoning board will be meeting on Tuesday May 7 and will plan a new date to have the site walk. The hearing will be the day after Memorial Day. The Conservation Committee will not be signing the comment sheet until the site walk is done. The committee thanked Mr. Howland who left at 8:29 pm. The committee also thanked the McRae's left at 8:26 pm

F. UNFINISHED (ONGOING) BUSINESS

1. Amphibian Crossing – The weather did not cooperate as well as everyone would have liked, it was difficult to find the amphibian crossing this year. This is something that the committee is very interested in and will continue next year. If things work out well then, the committee may open it up to be a public adventure someday.
2. Invasive Species – Ms. Crane has taken leadership in this project which will begin June 15. There was some discussion about the committee buying gloves and other things needed to remove invasive species. The committee will ask all volunteers to bring gloves and garden tools that they could use to remove the Bittersweet. There was a brief discussion on advertising this event, some of the ideas were Town Website and Facebook. Ms. Crane was thinking working on Oak Ridge South as a group, there is a lot of Bittersweet to be removed and this would be a great help. Ms. Miner sent an invitation to the Garden Club to participate. Ms. Crane said everyone will meet at the library and she will remind them to bring gloves, bug and tic spray and any garden tools that they will need to remove the Bittersweet. It was also mentioned that the Burleigh Farm UNH said that we could borrow equipment from them. There are no major issues with removing the Bittersweet as far as contamination to another area. This can be bagged and disposed in the regular trash.
3. Town Forests – Rich Cooper - None
4. Natural Resources Inventory – Ms. Miner received a quote from Rockingham Planning to update the Natural Resources Inventory and also to write a Natural Resources and Conservation Chapter for the Master Plan. This quote has a lot of information and Ms. Miner will be handing out copies to the committee. It also includes support from Theresa Walker. The committee can review the information and they will have a vote next month and then work on funding. Ms. deBeer says that there is a desperate need for new forest management plans for Oak Ridge and she would rather see this done before the Natural Resource Inventory. Also there is not a lot of usage of the NRI at the moment. Presently DES is using LiDAR for mapping to show all vernal pools in the State. There will be all new maps within the next 2 years so if all the maps are being updated then it may make sense to wait for the newer information. Ms. deBeer recommends focusing on Oak Ridge and then submit for an updated NRI. Ms. Miner mentioned making the master plan easier to read and understand as the current plan is overwhelming to read. Ms. deBeer would like a new and separate plan and map for each forest. Mr. Knee does not think it would be needed as most of the information would be the same being such a local area. Mr. Knee stated that Oak Ridge South forest was done with a light touch and he thinks that is plenty. Mr. Cooper and Ms. Miner have spoken with Charlie Moreno, they will have Mr. Cooper call him to get a scope and cost on reconnaissance and mapping. Charlie will be able to give a good idea about what would be best for what the committee is looking for. Things like Forestry plan, site plan and quadrants, maybe 2 chapters
5. Tree ID/Interpretive Trail – Bill Knee updated the committee about the design ideas for the tree identifications as possibly placing medallions on the top of each. Ms. Miner mentioned the letter from SCA again and having the interns come to work on projects. The committee will look into having them come here to work in 2020 as we are not ready to have them work this year. Some ideas were more accessible and better trails and extend boardwalk. Mr. Knee has a lot of ideas still.

6. Oak Ridge Forest Management Plan

G. OTHER BOARD BUSINESS AND LAND USE COMMENT SHEETS –

1. Shirking Road, Epping NH, - The Epping Planning Board is looking for input from their residents regarding building an asphalt plant in their town, this proposed plant would be 600' from the Fremont town line. There are many Fremont residents that have a lot of concerns and questions with the effects on the land, air and water quality in the area. Is this aquifer connected with Brown Brook in Fremont, they think that the flow of water will be mostly into Fremont. They only talked about air quality, traffic impact and ground issues not water issues. It will not be just crushing and grinding but making asphalt. They never brought up anything leaching into water from the stock piles of asphalt. Mr. Knee suggested they need to draft a letter to the Epping Planning Board regarding the asphalt plant and its impact on the town of Fremont. The committee has concerns about the measures that would be taken to mitigate or prevent the adverse effects of this plant. They will have 26 trucks traveling in and out, and they may sell to others at some point which would create more heavy trucking. Epping made a point at their meeting that all truck traffic will be going west to Beede Hill Rd to exit 6, which would put the heavy trucking through Fremont. Their meeting is on Thursday night and mail asap if no one is attending. Their engineer said that the asphalt will not leach but the process before it will leach into the water and ground. They are already working with the sand and gravel on the property next to the one they want to build on, they own multiple lots. They will use the piles to have a visual buffer. Claim they have the permit from DES regarding air emissions. After they grind, they mix and that is what smells. Ms. deBeer found it concerning how they are presenting the process. Rockingham Planning did a good job summarizing their concerns. Engineers did not offer much information. Ms. Miner will review the information from the emissions review when they wanted to put this plant in Fremont.

H. NEW BUSINESS

1. Sandown Road Bridge – At 7:25 pm Town Administrator Ms. Carlson spoke to the committee regarding the bridge closure on Sandown Road. The State sent the Town a letter stating that the bridge needed to be closed and repaired for deficiencies. This process has been moving forward since January, the bridge is currently closed to one lane traffic and the bridge will be closed for replacement of the outer bridge structure and all surface paving, no work will need to be done in the wetlands. There should be minimal impact to replace the existing bridge framing and paving. Ms. Carlson states that the Town will need a permit from DES Wetlands Bureau, and she is approaching the committee early to explain and answer any questions they may have. Everyone is trying to keep this project moving forward as the biggest impact will be on the traffic and about 50-60 residents when the bridge closes. Ms. Carlson is also looking for data sheets for Prime Wetland Report, Mr. Knee provided the information needed. Ms. Carlson is looking for an expedited review to keep the process moving forward so there will be minimum time impact on residents. Ms. Carlson will ask for the

application for the permit and the Conservation Commission will sign asap unless they have other questions which they do not see now. Ms. Miner made a motion for the committee to support an expedited process when the actual permit application is there, they will have special meeting to review and sign. There is also a Shoreland permit required. Ms. Carlson stated that the water is high at the bridge currently which is unusual for this time of year.

Ms. Carlson also encourages the committee to get involved into the paving factory plan that is before the Epping Planning Board and will only be 600' from the Fremont town line. It was suggested to do a water flow report and speak up at their planning meeting on 6:00 pm Thursday night at the Epping Town Hall.

Today was the Regional Impact meeting and a lot of Fremont residents attended, including Mr. Howland, Ms. deBeer and Ms. Carlson. Ms. Carlson will scan the memo from the meeting to the board members and a few other things. Maybe the committee could do a water flow report showing how this plant could affect Fremont residents.

The committee thanked Ms. Carlson and she left at 7:47 pm. Jack Karcz left at 7:49 pm.

I. INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE

1. LRAC Funding
2. SCA Letter
3. NHDES Restores CC Wetland Permit Review

J. NEXT MEETING:

The next regular monthly meeting will be on June 3 at 6:30 pm.

- K. ADJOURNMENT Ms. Miner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 pm. Ms. Crane seconded, and the vote was unanimous 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Clement