

HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
March 4, 2010
APPROVED: April 1, 2010

Chairman Paul Willard called the meeting to order at 7:01pm in the Town Hall Meeting Room

Members Present: Paul Willard, Wendy Sisson, Charlie Gorss, Jim Breslauer, Jaye Waldron and Patrick Doherty

Others Present: Liz Allard (LUB Admin), Lewis Beilman, Tony Shaw, Al Combs, Pam Browning and Candy Frazer

Review and Discuss Snowmobile Trails Recent Activities

Tony Shaw was present to discuss the use of the trails by snow mobiles. Mr. Shaw stated the season is pretty much over at this point, unless we get more snow. Mr. Shaw felt the season ended the day after Martin Luther King Day. Wendy Sisson asked if there is a way to contact all of the members. Mr. Shaw stated that he has all members email addresses. Mr. Shaw stated new signage was installed on the trails this season, which will be removed at the end of the season.

Mr. Shaw submitted photos of the trails including the trail at Bare Hill Pond, showing no erosion. Mr. Shaw explained that the Scorgie Land has had a portion of the stone wall widened to allow for the new piece of equipment that grooms the trails. A tree stump was also moved on that land as well. Mr. Shaw stated 141 man hours were put into the trails this year. Paul Willard asked if Mr. Shaw knew how many users of the trails are not club members. Mr. Shaw is not sure, but hopes those who do use the trails join the club, if not for anything more than getting the newsletters. Mr. Shaw did note that membership is up by 10 – 15 members. Ms. Sisson asked how the word is spread about the club. Mr. Shaw stated the club is a member of the Massachusetts Association of Snowmobiler's and information is included in the local newspapers. Mr. Shaw stated the club had several cross country skiers that have joined as well.

Ms. Sisson stated she has spoken with trail abutters and they all felt the use of the trails by snowmobiles was working well. Ms. Sisson is personally supportive of keeping it going as long as the issues expressed in her email are kept under control. At this level the use is good, but others would not like to see more members added. Wendy Sisson would like to see the number capped. Mr. Shaw did not think he could do that with the associate cost to groom and maintain the trails. Mr. Willard stated the Commission can not tell the club how many members it can have. Mr. Shaw stated that the out-of-Town individuals are not an issue; it is the ones that live in Town and do not become a part of the Club. Ms. Sisson suggested trying to get more of the local riders to join and become aware of the rules and regulations of the use of the trails.

As for snowmobiling on Bare Hill Pond, the club advises not to go on the pond itself. Ms. Sisson asked if there are posting as where the springs are located on the pond. Mr. Shaw stated no, because they do not recommend crossing the pond.

Ms. Sisson asked if there is anything that could be put down on the steep slopes to aid in erosion control. Mr. Shaw suggested wood chips and noted that the walking traffic has made a ditch on the trail. Mr. Willard stated the wood chips may be helpful. Ms. Sisson stated that although the club does not promote crossing the pond there are clear entry points onto the pond. Mr. Shaw stated that there are four ways to get onto the pond. Ms. Sisson stated the problem is that the vegetation at the edge of the pond is being eroded.

Ms. Sisson recommends notification about not being able to use the trails during low snow coverage and times of thaw. Mr. Shaw stated that the start date of the refill of Bare Hill Pond would be better on March 1st. It was explained to Mr. Shaw that unfortunately that needs to be done by February 1st. Ms. Sisson suggested that the members of the club be notified of the refill dates. Ms. Sisson asked if there is a way to get in touch with him in case of emergency. Mr. Shaw stated that the police dispatch could reach him or you could call him directly.

Mr. Shaw would like to clean the culvert up behind the transfer station. Rich Nota, Highway Director, has stated he has the material to do the work but not the time. Mr. Shaw would volunteer his time and equipment to resolve the issue. The culvert needs to be replaced and will require a filing of a Notice of Intent with the Commission. Another area on Old Shirley Road has fallen trees and in the fall Mr. Shaw would like to work on cleaning the trees and clearing the water ways. The Commission will take a look at this one and get back to Mr. Shaw with an answer.

Review and Discuss Annual Notification of Horse Riding on Harvard Trails

Al Combs, from the Agricultural Advisory Commission, along with Candy Frazer and Pam Browning were present to discuss the annual notice to horseback riders and the use of trails during mud season. All agreed that the same notice used last year will be used again this year for submittal to the newspapers. Candy Frazer stated the local horse owners would be happy to help clean up the trails any time during the year.

Paul Willard has an issue with horses on the edges of the fields when the ground is soft, which then leaves a divot that grass grows into and then makes the area uneven. Al Combs asked ask that the Agricultural Advisory Commission be associated with the notice. A change will need to be made to the contact person to Ms. Frazer.

Approval Minutes

Jaye Waldron made a motion to approve the minutes of February 18, 2010 as amended. Charlie Gorss seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Highway Department Request for Road Work

Liz Allard explained to the member that Rich Nota, Highway Director, has requested the Commissions input on what type of filing would be required for the replacement and/or

installation of culverts on Littleton County Road. The Commission would like a Notice of Intent filed. Mrs. Allard will inform Mr. Nota of the decision.

Review & Discuss Wheeler Realty Trust, 196 – 200 Ayer Road “Grant of Title V Nitrogen Loading Restriction & Easement on Nitrogen Credit Land”

Liz Allard explained to the members that she has spoken with Cindy Russo who informed her that an easement had been drafted and sent to Town Counsel Mark Lanza for his review. Attorney Lanza apparently has approved the document as written. The Russo’s are in the process of getting the easement on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting in May. Mrs. Allard has not heard back from the Town Administrator, Tim Bragan, in regards to her request as whether or not the Memorandum of Understanding needs town meeting vote. Cindy Russo has also attempted to get a response from Mr. Bragan.

Jaye Waldron has several questions about the restriction and easement. Jim Breslauer will review the document for next meeting.

Request to remove Fallen and Already cut Trees in Abbott Orchard

Liz Allard explained to the members that Chris Tracey has request to remove some of the brush and logs in the Abbott Orchard on Bolton Road. Members suggested talking with Frank Carlson who uses the orchard.

Bylaw Fee Allocation for FY11 Personnel Budget

Liz Allard explained to the members that they will need to vote to approve the appropriation of \$11,071 from the Bylaw fee account for the Fiscal Year 2011 (FY11) personnel budget, which may be increased if the Cost of Living Assessment (COLA) is approved for FY11. This appropriation pays for her salary. Mrs. Allard also explained that with funds being depleted each year the Commission will need to start thinking about ways to fund the position in the coming years. Wendy Sisson made a motion to allocate \$11,071 with a potential 2% increase for COLA should it be approved by the Finance Committee, for the FY11 personnel budget. Jim Breslauer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Nashua River Watershed Association Conservation Restriction Workshop

Liz Allard explained to the members that she has been contacted by Al Futterman, of the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA) who requested that the Commission send letters inviting property owners that hold a Conservation Restriction on their property to a free workshop in April on managing their properties which will be held at the Doyle Conservation Center in Leominster. The letters sent will be accompanied by an official invite from NRWA

Request to Hay Fields on Conservation Land

Liz Allard explained to the members that Steve Nigzus has asked if there is any available conservation land for haying. There are no fields that the Commission can think of. Mrs. Allard will inform Mr. Nigzus.

Deans Hill Conservation Restriction

Liz Allard explained to the members that the Conservation Restriction (CR) and Baseline report from Land Stewardship Inc. has been received and completed along with the necessary application. Mrs. Allard stated that she had requested the signatures of the Commission at the previous meeting and is again requesting those signatures now that the CR is in a different format than at the previous meeting.

Bare Hill Pond Watershed Management Committee Update

Members of the Commission have visited the beach to see the work that was done by the Bare Hill Pond Watershed Management Committee (BHPWMC) in regards to the dredging they requested in November. Large boulders have been removed from the pond along with the dredged material. Charlie Gorss feels the removal of rocks from the pond is disturbance of the wildlife habitat. Jim Breslauer stated the BHPWMC should be told to attend the next meeting to explain why they have done what they have. Wendy Sisson will contact BHPWMC Chairman Bruce Leicher to discuss attending the meeting on the 18th.

Potential Associate Member

Louis Beilman gave a brief description of his background. After a discussion with Mr. Beilman, members agreed to recommend his appointment to the Commission to the Board of Selectman.

Adjournment

Charlie Gorss made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:20pm. Jim Breslauer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Allard
Land Use Administrator/
Conservation Agent