

**Sandown Conservation Commission**

**Minutes**

**February 27, 2014**

**Date:** February 27, 2014

**Place:** Sandown Town Hall

**Members Present:** Paul Carey – Chair, Brian Butler, Kevin Major, Jim Devine

**Members Absent:** Mark Traeger, Joe McKinnon, Andrea Cairns

**Selectmen’s Liaison:** Mr. Jim Devine: Present

**Environmental Consultant:** Mr. Gerry Miller: Present

**Opening:** Mr. Carey opened the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

**Review of the 1/9/14 Minutes**

**MOTION:** Mr. Major made a motion to approve the 1/9/14 minutes as written. Mr. Butler seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.

**Discussion regarding a Conditional Use Permit for the PSNH H141/R193 Thermal Uprate Project**

*Tracy Tarr from GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. and Laura Gaines from PSNH were present.*

Ms. Tarr noted that the Board gave a favorable recommendation for the previous CUP request. She noted the Planning Board also approved that request. She noted after those approvals, the project engineer realized they needed to do additional splice work, because of that the town engineer recommended doing a separate CUP application for that one structure so they didn’t complicate the original application. Ms. Tarr noted they would just be doing splice work, not replacing a pole.

Ms. Tarr noted the location was near Wells Village Road on the western boundary of the town. Sheet 3.36 (aerial plan) shows the new impact, which is 220 sq. ft through the wetland. She noted it is an existing ATV trail and no rare species are on the property. She noted the wetlands impact would be matted, similar to the others.

Mr. Carey questioned if it was town owned property (Greenwood Hooke). The abutter’s list noted it wasn’t. Mr. Carey also noted it wasn’t likely a legal ATV trail.

Mr. Major asked if there were any abutter issues. Ms. Tarr noted they weren’t contacted with anything.

Mr. Major asked if it was on the same timeframe as the existing project. Ms. Tarr confirmed it was.

**MOTION:** Mr. Butler made a motion to make a favorable recommendation to the Planning Board for the Conditional Use Permit for the PSNH H141/R193 Thermal Uprate Project. Mr. Major seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.

**Fishing Derby**

Mr. Butler noted that Brianna Butler offered to be the Chair of the fishing derby again. He noted she already sent out letters requesting donations.

Members discussed the date and noted that it is usually the second Saturday of school vacation, which would be May 3, 2014.

Mr. Butler noted that Brianna would contact Mr. Genualdo to make sure we can use his pond again.

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There was no objection to having Brianna chair the event again.

Members agreed the amount of fish should stay the same as last year.

Mr. Butler noted she is away at college, but would try and come to one of their meetings to discuss the event.

**Brooke Smart, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Colin Lawson, Trout Unlimited regarding Trout Restoration Program for the Exeter River and NRCS Forest Management Activities**

Ms. Smart noted she had paperwork for the Hersey Road property since that property had been transferred to the town. There were some notes regarding the easement. Mr. Carey noted that it was likely the Board of Selectman that needed to be the ones to sign the paperwork. All members felt that was correct. Ms. Smart will check and see who signed the Porter property agreement and get back to the Board.

Ms. Smart noted that they were there to discuss the trout program and she was hoping to also talk about NRCS's forest management programs. She noted they could help bridge the gap for forest management and assist towns in finding a forester and work directly with that person to assist in the process. Mr. Butler questioned if NRCS could give financial assistance for the forest management plan. Ms. Smart noted that generally if they do a cut and the wood doesn't pay for the planning, then they could offer some assistance, but generally the cut would cover the cost of the work. Mr. Butler noted they have contacted Charlie Moreno to begin discussions with him to do a plan for the Wells Village Town Forest. Ms. Smart noted she works with Mr. Moreno on a regular basis and he's a great forester. They will help with the initiatives on any property that they manage. They are looking at all properties program-wide. Mr. Carey noted they did a cut in the Fremont Road Town Forest and they worked with Charlie Moreno for that.

Ms. Smart noted they've been doing assessment work along the Exeter River and sent a letter summarizing the work they've been doing. She noted they are very lucky to have Trout Unlimited as a resource.

Mr. Lawson reviewed his presentation. The New England Culvert Project is the name of his project. He works in NH, MA and VT. They do a lot of wood restoration and work primarily with NRCS in NH on wood restoration projects. He reviewed some of his goals of the project and they include: restoring connectivity in stream crossings; improving aquatic habitat; population surveys and migration monitoring.

He reviewed the drainage network for stream orders and noted the Exeter River is third in the order. He noted they look at the temperature of the water and identify what species should be there. His target species is brook trout. The wood they talk about has high benefit for brook trout but also other species.

He showed what an ideal structure would look at (road crossings and culverts). They look at it from an ecosystem approach and reduce vulnerability for all species that are present.

He noted high-quality habitats require large wood and noted how the wood can influence the nutrients and act as a food source. He noted there aren't a lot of old trees falling down since our forests are fairly young, so they look to hand place wood on the bottom of streams to create the ideal natural habitat. He noted they try and pull trees outside the 50' buffer to bring in. They cut the trees down and cut them to size, then drop into the stream channel. They try and tie them into the banks so when there are high flows they won't take off and go down stream.

Another technique they do is called "chop and drop" which is cutting the tree so that it falls directly into the stream and if they are hinged correctly, they will hold. He noted the problem with chop and drop is that it will take almost a decade before it is able to get into the stream. They also use trees with root wads, which are great habitats for fish. He showed several examples of each technique.

103 He identified how they chose the properties to work on. He noted of the 100 WRP properties, they narrowed it  
104 down to 30 properties. They rated each property then used that system to determine which properties received  
105 priority.

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107 Members discussed the possibility of including the additional town-owned property in the project. Mr. Lawson  
108 noted they could potentially go over the property boundary since the town owns the property to get more water  
109 flow for restoration.

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111 Moving forward, Mr. Lawson would like to revisit the property and design a conceptual restoration plan, draw  
112 a strategy, begin the permitting process and schedule field work.

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114 Mr. Carey noted that the culvert on Wells Village Road has been destroyed twice during the past two 100 year  
115 storms. He noted there is a lot of debris scattered into the water. He noted that Keach Nordstrom, our town  
116 engineer, has designed a new culvert and that culvert is slated to be rebuilt. Mr. Carey thought Mr. Lawson  
117 would want to coordinate with that project. Mr. Miller clarified they scope of work for the culvert.

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119 Mr. Major questioned exactly where they were looking to do work. Mr. Lawson noted they were planning on  
120 just doing work on that particular property, partly because it is NRCS property. They would have to discuss  
121 with NRCS the possibility of including the other parcel into the project.

122  
123 Mr. Major asked what the largest concerns were for landowners and abutters. Mr. Lawson noted the biggest  
124 concern is mobility of logs. Logs could be lifted and sent down stream and end up on their property. He noted  
125 they take a lot of precautions to avoid that.

126  
127 Mr. Major asked if they would be impacting fishing. Mr. Lawson noted fishing would greatly enhance. In the  
128 next few years, pools will be created and will encourage fish. The stream will change for anyone that paddles  
129 the river since there will be exposed wood in the stream, where now there isn't any.

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131 Members discussed the layout of the various parcels of land.

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133 Mr. Butler asked what types of wood they prefer to use. Mr. Lawson noted anything will work, but hard wood,  
134 like Hemlock, lasts longer. Mr. Miller added that Pine would also work well.

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136 Mr. Major asked what the timing was for the project. Mr. Lawson noted they would put together a project team  
137 of both paid staff and volunteers. The ideal time to do the work is when the water is low, so they may look to  
138 June or July. Mr. Major asked if they would ever consider involving scouts in the project. Mr. Lawson said  
139 absolutely it is a great project for them. Ms. Smart noted that they could work with them on the schedule to  
140 find the best time for the scouts to be involved.

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142 Mr. Lawson noted his goal in coming to the meeting was just to make them aware of the project. Mr. Carey  
143 noted it would be great if they could send the Commission a timeline of the project and the steps.

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145 Mr. Butler questioned what was the success rate in improving the habitat and what is the timeline for seeing  
146 results. Mr. Lawson noted that within three years they would see the habitat improve with the hydraulics  
147 forming. Within the first five years they will see a marked increase.

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149 Mr. Lawson noted prior to restoration they will do electro fishing and take a section of stream and survey what  
150 types of fish are in there as a baseline so they will be able to measure the increase in bio-density over time.

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152 Members thanked Ms. Smart and Mr. Lawson for coming in.

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154 **Valentine's Full-Moon Snowshoe Walk**

155 Mr. Major noted there was fresh snow and a completely clear night for the event; 60-70 people attended the  
156 event. They did a poll and found that 50% were from Sandown, the rest were from surrounding towns that saw  
157 the event in the paper or on social media. Less than half the people that attended had snow shod before. Most  
158 of the people had not been in the town forest ever. At one point they ran out of guides because there were so  
159 many people.

160  
161 They had excellent support from DPW. Mr. Genualdo plowed and sanded the parking lot. He built a bonfire  
162 with Christmas trees and brush. The day of the event, they had to rebuild it to get the snow out. The boy scouts  
163 sold hot chocolate and baked goods and make \$170. It was a very festive night. It was an excellent example for  
164 taxpayers to see the benefit of what Conservation does.

165  
166 Members thanked Artie Genualdo for all his work. They thanked Mr. Major for all his hard work creating the  
167 event.

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169 **Other Business**

170 Mr. Major did go on the Morrison Lane trail this past weekend. It's a very nice trail, not straight, well marked  
171 with signage and flashing. The trail that goes to cub pond isn't as well marked. Mr. Butler is going to attend  
172 the dedication for Jimmy Beucler who created the trail.

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174 **LUCT Warrant Article**

175 Mr. Butler asked if they had time to get a letter to the editor out. He will put something together and pass it  
176 around, but would like some assistance writing it.

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178 Mr. Carey noted that only \$15,000 was collected this year. He noted in the next five years we are going to be  
179 built-out. Mr. Major noted this is the last chance to generate any funds to preserve what we have. Mr. Carey  
180 noted he wished he knew about this process long before when he first moved into town. He noted that a lot of  
181 people are angry about the bond that we are paying for the Fremont Road Town Forest, but if we had been  
182 collecting 100% of the LUCT the whole time, we wouldn't have a bond.

183  
184 The town only has 6.2% of land in conservation, spread the word that this will help keep taxes low.

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186 **Correspondence**

187 Bank statements  
188 Events and newsletters

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190 **MOTION:** Mr. Major made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Devine seconded the motion. All members voted  
191 unanimously in favor. The motion passed. Meeting adjourned 8:26p.m.

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193 Respectfully Submitted,

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195 Andrea Cairns