

Washington Conservation Commission
Minutes – August 18, 2010

Assembly time: 7:00 PM.

Present: Sandy Robinson, Johanna Young, Nan Schwartz, Jed Schwartz, Ken Eastman

- 1.0 Approval of Minutes: Minutes from July, Ken wanted to make sure that it was clear that when you pull invasive plants out you need to bag them securely before taking them to the recycling center so you don't spread pieces that can take root elsewhere. Jed made a motion to approve, Johanna seconded, all voted in favor.

- 2.0 Old Business:
 - 2.1 Permits Committee – There were no new permits to look at. Sandy brought up the fact that we need to add a person on the committee since we lost Rich. She suggested that we ask Arin if she would like to join. Jed made a motion to have Arin join the committee subject to her agreement, seconded by Johanna, all voted in favor. Sandy will ask Arin if she would join the committee.

 - 2.2 Letter to Selectmen – We discussed the letter to the Selectmen about the lots that have been taken for taxes. Nan said that Carol is working on a letter and has gotten some input from Tom Taylor. Sandy suggested that we come up with criteria for evaluating the lots and the Permit Committee can go out and to site visits for each lot. The criteria would be a first level appraisal and could trigger the need for a higher level evaluation if certain factors were present. Ken mentioned that the town has recently taken several lots with houses or buildings on them and wanted to know what to do with them. Sandy feels these lots are different and should be sold if the owners don't buy them back within the allotted time. Ken stated that they are giving the owners a chance to get them back within a 120 day period. We will circulate the letter among Conservation Commission members by email and we will all have input before it goes to the Planning Board and Selectmen.

 - 2.3 Land Protection Committee – Nan had a copy of the finished LCHIP grant application for the Eccardt Farm project for everyone to look at. Sandy reported that we will be taking the application in to the LCHIP office on Thursday (tomorrow) morning. Nan said that they are now working on the Q2C (Quabbin to Cardigan Initiative) grant application, which will be used to

cover transaction costs for the Eccardt project. It is due on September 2nd. Nan and Jed spent \$130. on printing cost to get copies for the LCHIP application. They will submit the receipt to Linda. We went into Non-public session to discuss a money matter related to the Eccardt Farm project at 7:13PM, we returned to public session at 7:20PM.

- 2.4 Planning Board – Nan mentioned there is a public hearing for a correction to the LUO at 6:30PM on September 7th just prior to the regular Planning Board meeting. There was a recent incident where a building permit was approved contrary to the LUO because there was a perceived ambiguity in the wording. The Planning Board is fixing the ambiguity by moving the wording to the proper place in the LUO.
- 2.5 Energy Committee – Johanna reported that Al has been working on the solar panel project for the Highway Garage. A request for proposals is going out soon. There will be a month to get proposals in. Al is looking for suggestions for an educational component to the installation of the solar panels, it is part of the grant requirements. Johanna asked if we could put a link on the town website departments page for the Energy Committee which will make it easier to find their web pages. Nan will ask Steve Marshal to add them. Their web page can be found here: http://www.washingtonnh.org/WCC_Html/ECpage.html and their all-important links page is here: http://www.washingtonnh.org/WCC_Html/ECLinks.html, people should check there for information about energy efficiency and much more. Ken said that people are talking about energy plans for states and counties but what about the town level? Johanna said that maybe it should be a chapter in the Master Plan. Ken asked if there are any towns that have this component, Nan said yes there are and she will research. Ken thought that it would be a good addition to the Master Plan and could be referred to at Town Meeting. It could spark a lot of thought about what could be done with the LUO too. Nan said we have a pretty good handle on the municipal costs right now because of all the work the Energy Committee did for their grant applications last year.
- 2.6 Trash Pick up - Nan said that we were scheduled to pick up trash on our adopt a highway route on Saturday the 14th but she couldn't do it and decided not to send a reminder out. We need to pick a new day. We decided on September 18th, Sunday. Nan will remind everyone beforehand. Ken suggested he put in the Selectmen's minutes "Did You Know" section that we are picking up trash that day and encourage people to pick up trash on their piece of road that

day, also.

- 2.7 Jed mentioned that the Watershed Grant that his group got for East Washington is now complete. Erin Darrow, who was the engineer on the drainage system portion of the grant, recently did an educational presentation to a group of kids. She demonstrated the filtering of dirty stormwater, talked about the project and they all planted some blackberry and raspberry plants near the catch basin. Jed also showed the kids the solar powered watering system and solar powered electric fence charger, which were installed using grant money. This educational presentation was the last element required by the grant. Nan will be updating the website to reflect all the projects that were done with the grant money.
- 2.8 Ken updated us about the Lake Host Program. They are meeting their goals each year and the program is now funded each year at town meeting. Millen is the only lake association that is participating at this point but all other lakes are invited to put together a monitoring program at their public boat ramps. They monitor boats going into the water and coming out for invasive plants. They do this everyday of the summer season and are busiest on the weekends. Johanna had a drawing of a plant she found in her pond and wondered what it was, she also described another plant she had found. Ken had some sheets with pictures of invasive plants on them and he was going to share with her after the meeting.
- 3.0 What's Happening in Nature?
Ken told us about 2 very dramatic reports of a Bald Eagle attack on a loon chick on Millen Pond. He said the eagle dive-bombed after the chick three times, but never did get it. The loon parents were nearby desperately trying to distract the eagle and he guessed that it helped, as the eagle was not successful and the chick survived the attack. He said that he thinks the eagle is nesting on the backside of Millen Pond. Johanna mentioned that there are loons with chicks in Pillsbury and Nan mentioned hearing some on Island Pond. We received some great pictures of the Loons on Island Pond and posted them with more information on Loons and their chicks click here: http://www.washingtonnh.org/WCC_Html/NewinNature.html
Jed mentioned getting a call from George Eccard about a big black snake that they saw near their pond. Jed ran over to see it and got a picture of it, it was a Northern Water Snake, about 3 feet in length. He also said he has finally seen some little brown bats around. Sandy said she has seen bats also recently and has significant guano in her barn. This was good news.

Sandy mentioned having an army of dragonflies flying around in her yard. Nan said she does too, they seem to be most active around 6 o'clock at night, buzzing everywhere in great numbers. Ken said he noticed a decrease in dragonflies two summers ago and this is a big year for them. He wondered if the decrease in bats has brought about an increase in dragonflies (they are both mosquito eaters).

Johanna asked about a black bug that flies vertically with its legs out, all floppy. Nan said she would find out what it was and she thinks it is a bug that some people call a "Skeeter-eater" but it is actually a Crane fly. It is not a graceful flier because it is weak and tends to wobble in unpredictable patterns when it flies. They are harmless and don't actually eat mosquitoes, they feed on nectar.

Johanna said she has 2 Kingfishers on her pond and she thinks they are rivals and not a pair. Nan and Jed have also seen Kingfishers flying around and fishing on Mill Pond in East Washington.

Johanna also brought a picture of a turtle she took near her pond that she said was about 12 inches long. Jed thought it was a nice big painted turtle.

Johanna said she has been pulling some more Purple Loosestrife from her property. Johanna asked if we have cicadas here and Nan said yes, you sometimes hear them buzzing on hot summer days but not like you hear them in the south. Johanna said she had one drop out of a tree on her, surprising her.

Nan reported that she has had hummingbirds flying around her visiting the flowers on her pole beans for nectar while she was picking beans. Jed observed that they also land nearby on the corn tassels and sit there taking in the scenery. Ken hasn't had as many hummingbirds at his house this summer, he loves to watch their mating ritual where the males dive straight down in front of his window to get the attention of the females.

Ken saw a beaver on Millen Pond at about 5 PM, and Nan asked if it was living on the pond. He said that there was a lodge by the bridge last year that was removed and that they must be working on a new one somewhere, he will keep a lookout for it.

4.0 New Business: We welcomed Ken Eastman as a Selectmen's Representative, he was appointed by the Selectmen last week.

5.0 Correspondence:

Space Newsletter

SPNHF: Copy of "Amending or Terminating Conservation Easements:

Conforming to State Charitable Trust Requirements, guidelines for NH

Easement Holders"

DES copy of a letter to James Smith, file# 2010-00991, requesting more information.

DES copy of Shoreland permit for Ruggiero, file# 2010-00378

DES copy of Wetlands permit for Svitok, file#2009-01876

DES copy of receipt of Shoreland permit application from Shannon, file # 2010-01953

DES copy of Shoreland permit for Guyer, file # 2009-02593

DESnotice of completeness for Standard Dredge and Fill from the Town of Washington for the Freezeland Pond culvert replacement, file #2010-01820.

DES copy of Permit by Notification application for MacDougall at 283 Ashuelot Drive, beach sand replacement.

6.0 Adjourned at 7:55 PM, our next scheduled meeting is September 15th at 7 PM in the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Nan Schwartz
Secretary