

Washington Conservation Commission

Minutes – September 15, 2010

Assembly time: 7:00 PM.

Present: Carol Andrews, Arin Mills, Sandy Robinson, Johanna Young, Nan Schwartz, Jed Schwartz, Tom Taylor

- 1.0 Approval of Minutes: Minutes from August, Carol had a question about using the term ex-officio for Ken. NH law doesn't provide for an ex-officio member for conservation commissions and that we need to clarify the intent behind the appointment. We have, in the past, had members of the conservation commission who also became selectmen. Their voting status was because they are an appointed member of the commission and not because of their involvement as a selectman. It is highly desirable for a member of the Board of Selectmen to participate in our meetings, and we are pleased to have Ken's involvement. Sandy made a motion to approve, Jed seconded, all voted in favor.
- 2.0 Old Business:
 - 2.1 Permits Committee – There were no new permits to discuss. There was a DES "Notice of Routine Maintenance" from DOT to replace a culvert on Rt. 31 near Pillsbury State Park.

We are pleased that Arin has agreed to join the Permits Committee. She is keeping an eye on the Highland Haven property situation, where she noticed no erosion control measures on the driveway culvert installation.
 - 2.2 Tax Sale – Carol spoke about the group of members that attended the Planning Board meeting to discuss the letter we had drafted. The Planning Board members worked on the letter together with the CC members to add their thoughts and concerns. Nan said the final letter was sent to the Selectmen last Thursday and they will now decide what to do next. There was a lot of discussion about process but the Selectmen just want our comments, at this point. It was suggested that we create a combined group to work on the assessment of the properties. Tom has some other ideas and wants to approach the Planning Board about dealing with under-designed and hazardous conditions in some of the subdivisions in town. These subdivisions only have one way in and out which could create problems in an emergency. Carol thinks the town should vote each year at town meeting whether or not to sell lots.

- 2.3 Land Protection Committee – Sandy gave an update on the Eccardt Farm conservation easement project. The Q2C grant application went in and we are awaiting news on that later this month. Fundraising is going well but we are looking for broad support from the local community. Nan put up a web page: http://www.washingtonnh.org/WCC_Html/EccardtFarm.html with information about the project and a place to go and make a pledge. There is also a page for the Open House and raffle: http://www.washingtonnh.org/WCC_Html/EccardtFarmOHRaffle.html

We have planned an Open House (October 9th, 11-3, at the farm) and Raffle (with great farm store prizes) in the hopes that this will bring people out. We need to get lots of smaller donations toward the money needed to close on the easement. Johanna suggested a presence at the Farmer's Market on Saturdays. Sandy will contact Lionel about it. Sandy discussed expenditures and had a budget to show us for the raffle and Open House. She thinks that up to \$400. will cover everything needed for the Open House and raffle. The Washington Snowriders are coming to the Open House to cook Eccardt Farm burgers and hotdogs. Jed made a motion to spend up to \$400 for this purpose, Johanna seconded, all voted in favor. Sandy said that we will need a handout page with information about the project, Nan will put something together for this. Sandy talked about what we have done so far for fundraising – an email asking for pledges was sent to lake association members by an association member, we are putting up posters, the web pages are up, she spoke with Michael Pon about putting something in the Villager, the planning for the Open House is going well, raffle tickets are being sold and Sandy passed out more packets to members. Sandy has done an incredible job organizing everything and getting prizes for the raffle and spreading the word. Walpole Creamery has generously donated the ice cream prize, Spring Meadow Farm donated eggs, Ed Thayer and family have donated maple syrup and Gould Hill has donated cider and apples. The Washington Snowriders will be at the Open House grilling burgers and hotdogs for us. We hope everyone one will come to the Open House and donate money for the project. Arin asked Nan to send her a pdf of the poster. A flyer about the Open House will be going home with the school kids.

- 2.4 Energy Committee – Johanna said the RFP (bid package) went out for the solar panel project at the Highway Garage. So far 3 people/companies have shown interest in the project. It is posted on the government website also. They expect the project to be done by 2012 and they will have a ribbon cutting and informational signs.

3.0 What's Happening in Nature?

Johanna told us about a woodchuck who made a tunnel right outside their back door in a sandy spot, she has also had a turtle lay eggs near that sandy spot. She has also seen lots of small yellow birds but they aren't goldfinches. She has 2 turtles with black shells with yellow markings near her pond.

Jed told about recent coyote problems, 2 nights ago, right across the street from the house, an old ewe was killed in the pasture. Tom commented that the word from hunters is that there are more and more of them around.

Nan commented that there are tons of wild turkeys around, a flock raided their blueberry patch and wiped it out.

Arin has had a bluish grey bird outside her house hanging around, she saw a Ribbon Snake crossing the road at night in the rain. She told us that her Hognose snakes had their babies hatch and they saw 4 of the young ones. They realized there were 2 nests so there is probably another female who laid eggs. One of the females they were tracking got caught in erosion control netting and died and one of the males died in the river. They still have one they are tracking but it is difficult because it has moved out of range.

Tom said he saw a water snake in Ashuelot that was about 5 feet long. That is a big one and people should know that they are harmless and they should leave them alone.

Jed reported that the VLAP testing on Mill Pond this year has been up and down. The geese were not as scared of the swans and hung around more, although they didn't nest on the pond. The lack of rain meant that less water moved through the pond (which always helps to keep the water cleaner). Tom said LAE put up rope with shiny danglies to keep the geese away and it seemed to work. He has talked to Parks and Rec about bringing in a circulator to Millen Pond by the beach to get the water moving and keep it cleaner at the beach. Luckily it is time for the geese to leave for their migration and we won't have to worry about them until next spring. For more information about Canada geese migration (and other birds to watch for during migration), click here: http://www.washingtonnh.org/WCC_Html/NewinNature.html

4.0 New Business: Carol wanted us to be aware of some dates coming up:

The Open House at the Eccardt Farm is on October 9th, from 11-3

The Hike in honor of Rich Cook is on October 11th, at 10AM, meet at the Camp Morgan Beach area, we will be hiking the Camp Morgan trail loop.

NHACC Annual Meeting and Conference, November 6th.

Tom mentioned some good hiking spots that he has enjoyed, such as the

Ashuelot River corridor to the north, he says it is wild and beautiful. Carol would like to do a kayak trip sometime up in that area. Arin asked about the Huntley Mountain area on the Marlow side of Ashuelot. Tom recommended that area and Silver Mountain in Lempster. Tom would like to do a winter hike this year.

5.0 Correspondence:

DES copy of DOT Notice of Routine Maintenance for culvert replacement on Rt. 31 near Pillsbury

DES request for more information on Minimum Impact Expedited application File# 2010-0099, Smith, Map 14/Lot 22.

6.0 Adjourned at 8:10 PM, our next scheduled meeting is October 20th at 7 PM in the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Nan Schwartz
Secretary