

Washington Conservation Commission
Minutes - January 18, 2012

Assembly time: 7:00 PM.

Present: Jed Schwartz, Carol Andrews, Arin Mills, Nan Schwartz, Johanna Young, Sandy Robinson, and Ken Eastman

- 1.0 Approval of Minutes: Minutes from November meeting, Sandy made a motion to approve, Carol seconded, all voted in favor. There was no meeting held in December.
- 2.0 Old Business:
 - 2.1 Permits Committee – No new permits to look at.
- 3.0 Committee and Board reports:
 - 3.1 Land Protection Committee – Jed reported that the Q2C grant application that we submitted was approved for funding for the Eccardt Farm Conservation Easement addition project. The Forest Society and LCHIP have both approved adding the property to the easement. The project should wrap up quickly. Sandy made a motion to spend up to \$6,000 for the transactions costs, Carol seconded, all voted in favor. All but \$1,000 for the stewardship fee will be refunded by the Q2C grant.
Jed mentioned they are meeting with a group from the Millen Pond area to talk about conservation easements.
 - 3.2 Energy Committee – Johanna reports that the Energy Committee didn't have a meeting in December but they will be meeting tomorrow night. She said the Elementary School energy audit is done and she will send us copies of it to look over. Jed said that we should post all the energy audits online so people can read through them, Nan will do that. It was felt that the town could do a few of the projects to help save the money by saving energy. Johanna said they are still hoping to do a "Button-Up" presentation in Washington this year and pair it with a practical demonstration. Ken mentioned he learned through Charlie that all the town buildings have 2 meters, one for demand and one for time of use

rate. He will check into this to see how the town is actually charged for electricity.

- 3.3 Planning Board – Nan reported that the PB will have 2 items on a special ballot at town meeting. The updated sign ordinance and an update for LUO section 200 concerning minor home businesses, which will help make it easier to classify businesses and decide whether or not they need permits.
- 3.4 Forestry Committee – Tom wasn't here tonight but Jed mentioned that Tom spoke with him about the town forest additions and the warrant article he is proposing for town meeting concerning the additions. He also mentioned that the Nuthatch Way TF is a good candidate for replanting and a possible project for later this year.
- 3.5 Legislative update – Carol said that there are many bills being considered this session in the legislature and some are worrying to CCs. She attended a hearing for HB1515 yesterday that went well and the hope is that this bill will be killed. Next Tuesday there is a hearing for HB1540, which will take away our ability to place a conservation easement with a non-profit group. Contact your legislator on this one. Municipal organizations are against it so they will be arguing against it also. HB1586 is attempting to make it so you have to go to town meeting to make a conservation land purchase, this will make it very difficult to close on some time sensitive projects. NHACC is keeping an eye on all pertinent bills and will keep us informed.
- 4.0 Public Presentation possibilities:
 - 4.1 Arin said we are booked for Watershed on Wheels visit to the Elementary School on May 21st. They will have the 3rd, 4th and 5th graders participate. It is a 1 hour and 40 minute presentation for each group. They have a 10'x28" trailer that they bring in with some kiosks that they set up separately. They will need power and a good flat spot to park and set up. Maybe Camp Morgan parking lot if the school parking lot can't accommodate it. She received a power point document from the WoW coordinator that she needs

to go through. She will send it to Nan also. Ken asked if the public could participate and Arin will ask the coordinator. We decided we would do this instead of the annual vernal pool outing this year.

Arin was wondering if we can make it about Washington.

Everyone volunteered to help out if we can, Arin will let us know what is needed. Thank you to Arin for spearheading a visit from WoW. More information on WoW here: http://www.fws.gov/r5soc/educational_resources/watershed-on-wheels.html

For other presentation possibilities Carol suggested we could bring in Steve Taylor to talk about agriculture at some point. Nan had a list of some other presentation possibilities; we will keep it to refer to for future ideas. She also looked into Carol's suggestion last month that funds are available through the NH Humanities Council to bring in speakers. Arin mentioned doing something historical or archeological, maybe stonewalls. Jed said that Kevin Gardner does a great talk on stonewalls. Arin suggested maybe we could do a project on rain barrels. Ken said that the Town Hall 225th birthday party group is looking for presentations or projects to go on during their celebration this summer. We will continue the discussions next meeting.

We forgot to talk about a winter hike but we will talk to Tom Taylor about it next month and try to plan something for later this winter.

5.0 Web Mapping:

Arin went to a presentation/workshop on GIS based web mapping and shared with us a map she has been working on showing the recreation opportunities available in Washington. She said these maps can be embedded in a web site; Nan will work on figuring out how to do this with our web site. She said we could do maps with wildlife sitings or plants and that you can import different tables and layers to add to your map. The possibilities are huge. We had a great time playing with the map she had done and will brainstorm more ideas we can use for these maps.

6.0 New Business:

6.1 Ken brought up an article he found in the LGC magazine about

New England food systems and Vermont's Farm to Plate Strategic plan. It emphasizes how important it is to have a community's food grown locally and the savings that come from food not being trucked long distances. Nan said we are lucky to have the Eccardt Farm store right here in town where we can buy meats, milk and more that is produced locally. John Carroll wrote the article and he is a UNH professor of Environmental Conservation, who has written several books on food, agriculture and sustainability.

7.0 What's Happening in Nature?

Jed mentioned that NH Fish & Game are conducting a wild turkey survey from January 1st to March 31st, and they would like to know if you see a flock. You can fill out a simple form on the F&G web site here: <http://www.wildnh.com/turkeysurvey> They ask that you do not report multiple sightings of the same flock. This is the 4th year they are doing the survey.

Johanna said she has a lot of mice in her house this year. She even had one sitting up on her shower curtain rod and she wondered why there were so many around this year. Arin said she has noticed a lot of mice at her house, too.

Sandy said she has had some bluebirds in her back yard and has seen the sitting on the nesting box. She wondered how unusual this was at this time of year. For more information about bluebirds overwintering in NH click here: http://www.washingtonnh.org/WCC_Html/NewinNature.html

Jed said that they had to have their big maple tree taken down last week and there were some flying squirrels that had been nesting in the hollow part of the tree. They all escaped safely and swooped off across the street where there were some suitable places to nest in old tree hollows.

Arin said she went snowshoeing and saw lots of snowshoe hare tracks. Sandy commented that there seem to be a lot of snowshoe hares around this year as she has also seen lot of tracks up beyond the Burns' place.

Johanna saw a bobcat on the way to Lempster.

Arin said she has large flocks of Juncos under her bird feeder recently.

Sandy saw a group of eight crows behind her hen house. Carol asked about the recent moose rescue on the ice at Pillsbury State Park, Jed told his story of taking part in the rescue. NH Fish & Game and Washington Fire, Rescue and Police members all teamed together to save the moose, who couldn't get her footing on the slippery ice. It was a happy ending for the moose and the rescuers.

Ken asked if Great Blue Herons overwinter but no one knew the answer to his question. He thinks he saw one take flight about an hour before sunset this evening near Millen Pond. Nan will see what she can find out about what herons do in winter.

Carol mentioned the Forest Society was successful in their fundraising for the Balsam's project. Now a significant property in the North Country will be protected. Arin said that as part of the Northern Pass project survey they did an inventory of some of the Guard's properties up north and they found some rare species.

7.0 Correspondence:

Letter from Q2C notifying us we received the grant we applied for, signed by Jed and returned.

DES notice of emergency authorization for culvert replacement, by road crew for TM 11-ROW, Millen Pond Road

DES copy of Wetlands permit, for TM 12-ROW, Mill Street Bridge replacement

DES, copy of shoreland permit for Butcher 455 Washington Road, TM 12-103, Island Pond

DES notice of acceptance of septic application for TM 11-40, Millen Pond Road

DES notice of acceptance of septic application for TM 24-66, 2 Lookout Point Road

Resource - NHANRS newsletter

NHANRS Annual meeting agenda and information

Postcard from SPNHF asking people to call their Senator in support of Bragdon/Forrester amendment to HB648

6.0 Adjourned at 8:45 PM, our next scheduled meeting is February 15th at 7 PM in the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Nan Schwartz
Secretary