

Washington Conservation Commission
Minutes – August 15, 2012

Assembly time: 7:00 PM.

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

Public present: Tim Ferwerda, Ed Thayer, Mike Otterson, Jim Grenier

Jim Grenier introduced himself to the commission members and those present, he is running for the District 7 NH House representative seat. He lives in Lempster on a farm and invited us to come out sometime to tour his farm and learn about his conservation easement.

1.0 Approval of Minutes: Minutes from July meeting, Sandy made a motion to approve, Tom seconded, all voted in favor.

2.0 Permits Committee – Tim Ferwerda presented the plans for the Faxon Hill culvert replacement project and plans for dredging the pond at the Wolfe residence. Ed joined him to speak about the culvert replacement plans. They explained the existing 36” metal culvert is failing and they propose to replace it with a 4’x8’ box culvert (cement). This is a minimum impact application. They will be cutting a few trees (marked on site) and have arranged with the Siciliano’s to put a temporary roadway on their property while the culvert work is being done. Arin asked about the seed being used to reseed after construction. Tim said it is native seed mix. Arin asked about the use of erosion control netting for the project. She and Jed have both observed problems with its use in the past. It is dangerous for amphibians and snakes who will get caught in the netting and die. It is supposed to be something that decomposes over time but actually doesn’t. Tim said they will not be using this product on this project. Carol made a motion that the permit committee sign the application if everything looks good at the site visit, Sandy seconded and all voted in favor.

Tim then presented the plans for the pond dredging at the Wolfe residence (TM 4-3). The manmade pond is behind their house and is spring fed with forested wetlands beyond the outlet stream. The

Ashuelot River is about 300' away from the site. The pond is about 5 ½ feet deep right now and will be 4 to 5 feet deeper when finished. They will use a dewatering pump into a dirt bag to filter the runoff during dredging. They will store the dredged materials on site for dewatering and then will use the materials later. This is also a minimum impact application. Carol made a motion to have the committee sign the application after inspection if all looks good, Sandy seconded the motion, all voted in favor. The permit committee will go out to look at both projects Thursday morning.

3.0 Committee and Board reports:

3.1 Forestry Committee – Tom said there have been a couple of meetings about the disputed six-acre parcel that was deeded out of the Farnsworth Hill Town Forest. There are continuing talks and they are meeting with representatives of Provan & Lorber about it on Thursday. Tom wanted to talk about forestry practices because he has been out on the six-acre issue and has observed the clear cutting being done that doesn't observe any buffers to wetlands or property lines. He asked who has jurisdiction on rules- the town or someone else? He asked about the forester who works for the town and whether there is a requirement to reseed an area after logging. He is worried about silt running into Ashuelot after a storm event when the logging is all done. Nan said the town's forester, Anita Blakeman, goes out for the Assessors to check the cut for timber taxes owed to the town. Carol said that the state regulates all of the logging rules, which include slash laws, basal area laws, 4th order stream and wetlands and that most laws address esthetics. Sandy said we have a county forester, Doug Miner, who you can call if you think there is a problem and you have direct observation. Carol provided a complaint form that was printed out from the timber harvest laws guide, available here: <http://www.nhdf.org/library/pdf/Forest%20Protection/Guide%20to%20NH%20Timber%20Harvesting%20Laws%20rvs2012.pdf>

Tom would like to have the Selectmen get involved and asked if towns can write their own ordinances. The answer was no, forestry is in the hands of the state. He asked if we could have the Selectmen sent Anita out and give an opinion. We can speak to the

Assessors about their process and what Anita looks for when she goes out. Carol suggested we could do some education about best practices for forestry. Jed said we can continue the conversation, we don't have the infrastructure and money to go look at these cuts at this point nor do we have jurisdiction.

- 3.2 Land Protection Committee – We asked Mike Otterson if he was attending our meeting for any particular issue. He said he has been seeing notices up around town for various site walks and meetings and asked what that was all about. Nan said they have been for either - Land Protection Committee meetings or Town owned lot site walks and meetings. Mike said it was about the Town Owned lots, Nan explained that we were asked by the Selectmen to work with the Planning Board and Assessors to look at all the lots the town acquired for unpaid taxes and give them recommendations for what to do with them (sell or hold). This requires map analysis, site walks and meetings to come up with recommendations. We just finished up looking at 2 lots in LAE, last year we did around 33 lots all over town and we have 4 new lots to look at, coming up soon. These lots are sometimes sold to abutters and require merging and a few have gone on the open market.
Jed explained we are continuing to talk, educate and advise a group on Millen Pond about a land protection project on Farnsworth Hill. They are also speaking with a representative from the Forest Society (SPNHF) and pledges are being sought from interested people to buy the land. If the project goes forward we have pledged \$20K towards the transaction costs if it is protected.
- 3.3 Planning Board – Nan reported that the PB is talking about the RV section of the LUO and is working on updating this section for fairness and clarity.
- 3.4 Energy Committee – Johanna reported that they had to reschedule their August meeting to next week because they didn't have a quorum on their regular date.
- 3.5 Legislative update – None

- 4.0 Public Presentations and workshops:
- 4.1 The Eccard Farm hike is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 1st or Sunday, Sept. 2nd (rain date). We will start at 9:30AM, meeting at the pond in East Washington, stopping at the farm store for ice cream half way through the hike and then finish the rest of the hike back at the pond. We discussed buying the ice cream, cones and cups. Sandy made a motion to buy supplies and spend up to \$50 for this purpose, Nan seconded, all voted in favor. Arin has made a poster she will send to Nan and she will print them and put them up. Arin will do half sheets to give to Mrs. Lull to send home with the kids.
- 4.2 The Aquatic Invasive Plants presentation by Andrea LaMoreux of NH Lakes Association is scheduled for August 25th at 7PM at Camp Morgan Lodge. Ken has set up the presentation and the posters for the event are up around town. It should be very interesting and there is a hands-on plant identification portion to the talk. Please attend! We discussed a thank you gift for Andrea and Nan will get something appropriate.
- 4.3 Arin has agreed to lead a second hike we are doing, that the Harris Center is sponsoring. It will be on October 6th or 7th (rain date). We will have people park their cars on Faxon Hill at the radio tower site and do a Camp Morgan trail loop then cross the road and hike the Oak Hill trail to the top, take in the view and hike back to Faxon Hill. Arin and those who want to join her will do the hike once before the event.
- 5.0 Adopt-a-Highway – Our next pick up day is August 18th but we need to reschedule because many of us will be away this weekend. We will discuss and pick a make up date by email. We were sent the paperwork to renew our membership in the Adopt-a-Highway program for the next 2 years. We all agree to have Jed sign the paperwork and we'll keep doing our trash route.
- 6.0 Town Owned Lots – Nan said there was a meeting last Thursday

to come up with recommendations for the Selectmen on these lots. The recommendations have been given to the Selectmen. We will have 4 for lots to look at soon.

7.0 Millen Lake cleanup – Johanna said that when she was swimming and practicing for her swim on Millen Pond she has noticed a lot of trash on the bottom of the lake, beer bottles, cans and there is a old tire, all on the town forest side of the lake. She wondered if we could do a cleanup day for the lake. Jed said it might be hard to schedule right now because everyone is so busy but maybe we could plan it for next summer. She could also ask Bob Fraser if he is interested because we would need a boat to gather the trash in. Johanna asked if there were donations for her memorial swim and we didn't know yet. We will have to check with Lynda and report next month. Jed commented that the swim was great and everyone had a wonderful time. Nan will post pictures of the event on our website soon.

8.0 Other business – None

9.0 What's Happening in Nature?

Jed saw a large bobcat crossing the street in broad daylight between Sandy and Lynn's. Sandy thought it is probably the same on she has seen over in the Ayers Pond Road area. They have a pretty large territory.

Arin said her husband and daughter saw a fisher and a bear on Faxon Hill, on different occasions. Jed also saw a young bear close to Island Pond Rd. Carol said her parents have seen bears recently on Halfmoon Pond Rd.

Johanna said Lindley has pulled some pretty big perch out of their pond. When she was swimming in Millen she saw poop on the bottom of the pond that she thinks is from beavers. She saw other evidence of beaver activities on Millen. Nan thought maybe the beavers moved over there after their dam blew out across from Bachands, earlier this summer. Jim Grenier said that he has heard that beavers will eat their poop to get the undigested fiber that is left in it!

Jed commented that Mill Pond in East Washington is really low,

most of the predicted rain has not fallen in EW and while storms have happened all around us.

Arin has seen a hawk just to the north of the transfer station several times. It is medium sized with a white chest and speckling. The hawk was posing perfectly one morning on a post on the side of the road, but sadly she didn't have her camera to get a photo.

Jed has had a lot of activity of smaller creatures eating things out of the garden. He has had squirrels (he thinks) pulling down sunflower branches to eat the sunflower seeds. He also had all the fruit disappear off the pear tree. This dry year may be making the animals desperate for food.

Carol said that the purple loosestrife is blooming right now. I'm sure everyone has seen it as they drive around the state. Johanna said she pulled some off her dam recently. It is pretty but this invasive plant is a bad one. Burn it or bag it and take it to the transfer station if you pull some out. Don't compost because the seeds will sprout the next year.

Arin commented that the wetlands are beginning to change from the dry conditions. Why are wetlands important to us? For more information about wetlands and what to do for us, click here:

http://www.washingtonnh.org/WCC_Html/NewinNature.html

9.0 Correspondence:

Letter from Frank Linnenbringer asking us to renew on our Adopt-a-Highway route

Notice from DES of acceptance of Wetlands permit application for Dole Schoolhouse Rd. bridge project

DES – The Source

Fox State Forest Newsletter

10.0 Adjourned at 8:15 PM, our next scheduled meeting is September 19th at 7 PM in the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Nan Schwartz, Secretary