

Town of Swanzev, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes – December 5, 2016

Note: Minutes are subject to review, correction, and approval by the Commission. Review, correction, and approval of minutes generally occur at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission.

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Swanzev Conservation Commission was called to order by Chair Wally Smith at 4:00 p.m. at Town Hall. Committee Members Present: Chair Smith, Bob Goodrich, Mike Morrison, Steve Stepenuck, Jane Johnson and Beverly Bernard.

ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Director of Public Works Lee Dunham and Selectman W. William Hutwelker

MINUTES

- Minutes of November 7, 2016 were considered. **Motion** by Morrison to approve the Minutes of November 7, 2016. There was a second from Goodrich. **Motion passed.**

NEW BUSINESS

Access to Honey Hill trails off Route 32 - initiative

Bernard passed out a description of the project and explained that she and Dunham did a site walk and discussed what is able to be done to achieve safe access. Smith noted that the Board of Selectmen asked that the neighbors be informed of the plans for the area. Dunham said he will speak to utility provider Eversource about the possibility of getting them to take the tree down. \$1,800 is an estimate to remove the large tree. The access would be a 24' X 34' paved area with gravel for the small parking area. The estimate for the entrance and parking area is a cost of \$2,000 – 3,000. Dunham said he would come up with a sketch for the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT). There was a discussion about access to the future cemetery. There was a discussion about signage for the site. Smith suggested a "Please do not Litter" sign. There was a consensus that the Conservation Commission would not ask the Town for any funds provided for this project once the future cemetery is established.

Johnson **moved** to fund up to \$6,000 for this project from the Conservation Fund, with second by Stepenuck. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

The Commission thanked Dunham and Bernard for their efforts on behalf of this project.

Water Protection Committee - Activity

Bernard and Johnson updated the group on the fact that Andrew Madison from Granite State Rural Water should have a document for us by March of 2017 and then the Commission would be responsible for educating the public on the purpose of a Water Protection Ordinance. The idea would be to be presented on the Warrant for a vote in 2018.

Trail maps on line - info provided by Barbara Skuly

There was a discussion regarding visitors using Swanzey trails and publicizing the trails online. Johnson suggested learning more about the idea. Johnson said that an individual from the UNH Extension service can explain this project and it was decided to invite the gentlemen to speak to us in January or March of 2017.

Swanzey Lake Property - Survey Results/Border resolution

Stepenuck reported that surveyor John Bridges said he has been researching deeds and talking to adjacent landowners to try to determine ownership of the land on either side of the dam which has been in dispute. Stepenuck said Bridges has had difficulty reaching the appropriate persons to discuss property lines. Stepenuck will provide an update to the Office of State Planning with the State of New Hampshire Conservation Land Stewardship program.

2016 Annual Report – status

There was a discussion about the draft provided by Stepenuck who asked for more input from the members. Bernard asked Stepenuck to add the Rail Trail project funded by the Conservation Commission at \$5,000 and the funds provided for the Ballou Conservation Easement. Stepenuck agreed to add those to the document.

Ballou Easement

There was a discussion about the fact that the final Conservation Easement Deed was signed by the Board of Selectmen prior to the Commission having an opportunity for input. There was a discussion about the document's Rights of the Grantor, which indicated restrictions for public access could be imposed. Smith suggested that the Conservation Commission no longer be part of the Conservation Easement process since this is the responsibility of the Open Space Committee (OSC). Smith said that if the Conservation Commission is asked for input by the Town Planner or the Selectmen or the Town Administrator then we could provide it but otherwise not be involved.

Stepenuck said that if public money is being provided, then public access should be required without limitations. Johnson pointed out that any group that provides funds for an easement should have the right to see the final draft of the easement before it is signed. Stepenuck said that in other towns the parties involved in funding the easement are involved in writing the easement document. Johnson added that the Conservation Commission should not fund easements in the future.

Motion was made by Stepenuck that all funding of conservation easements by the Conservation Commission in the future be contingent on Conservation Commission approval of the final draft of the proposed easement. Second to the motion was made by Morrison. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Nickate Property, LLC

Smith provided a *Department Head Review Form - Public Hearing* which allows concerns to be articulated in the form for an application by Nickate Property for a variance to build an addition. There was a discussion about the possibility that wetlands have been impacted or will be impacted in the future. This concern will be added to the commentary requested for the review of the project by the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Volunteer Service Statement & Agreement - info only

Smith provided a form from Human Resources and Service Coordinator Edna Coates which would be applicable to folks, including young people, when assisting on the Spring Roadside Clean-up. Smith noted that use of Cheshire County prisoners for work projects would also require the form.

OLD BUSINESS

Anti-Dumping Ordinance – Signage

This was tabled by Smith until further notice.

Expenditure Statement

There was a brief discussion about the contribution toward California Brook Conservation Easement.

New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions

Executive Director Barbara Richter will attend February 6, 2017 Meeting. She lives in Keene, NH. There was a discussion about the possibility of holding a meeting of Cheshire County Conservation Commissions at Whitcomb Hall.

Morrison said he went to the New Hampshire Wildlife Federation annual meeting and updated the members on their work. He said the Federation wants to eliminate the Fish & Game Commission and create a new governing body with more diversity to reflect broader user groups. More to come for next month – Smith agreed to put the item on the agenda for next month.

REPORTS

Adams/Windyhurst Update

Smith said that he received an email from Stacy Gambrel from the Monadnock Conservancy that the grant request to LCHIP was fully funded at \$100,000 and since the project is fully funded, there is no anticipation of needing funding from the Town’s conservation funds.

Connecticut River Watershed Council – Donation Request

Smith presented a request for donation from the Connecticut River Watershed Council. Stepenuck said they sponsor the annual river clean-up. Bernard said that unless someone is willing to come to visit the Commission and explain their work and why they do it, then she is not interested in providing funds. The other members agreed with her.

Selectman Input

Selectman Bill Hutwelker was present to learn about what the Commission does and to observe our work. He also thanked the Commission for our service to the community.

Next meeting: Monday January 9th at 3:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There was a **motion** to adjourn by Morrison with a second from Stepenuck. All were in favor. Adjournment occurred at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary