

Swanzy Conservation Commission

May 12, 2009 meeting minutes

Minutes are not final until reviewed and approved by the Conservation Commission.

Review and approval of minutes generally takes place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Conservation Commission.

ATTENDANCE Michael Day, Chair; Gary Colburn, Deb Crowder, Paul Daniello, Mike Morrison, Stephen Stepenuck (arrived at 7:10). Alternates Jane Johnson, Bob Goodrich.

Excused absence: Paul Daniello

Chairman Day called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m., and seated Goodrich for Daniello, and Johnson for Stepenuck until 7:24.

GUEST Barbara Skuly, Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee (7:05 – 7:22)

Skuly presented information on the history and monitoring activities of the Committee. She said that Keene has withdrawn funding for *E. coli* tests. The group discussed future ways to cover the costs, including taking the request to voters as a component of a public health warrant. Although the bulk of the testing occurs in Keene and Swanzy, Skuly emphasized the importance of widespread town participation in the sampling, a \$900 annual expense. Skuly said that any excess funds could enable the Committee to conduct an additional round of phosphorus testing.

SCC members calculated Swanzy's cost to be \$350, and agreed to help support other Conservation Commissions by donating an extra \$50.

Motion by Crowder to appropriate \$400 from the Conservation Fund to pay for *E. coli* testing in Swanzy. Second by Morrison. All in favor.

COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

Open SCC position Goodrich volunteered to become a full member. Day will bring Goodrich's interest to Town Administrator Fox.

Election of Vice-chairperson for 2009-2010 **Motion** by Morrison to nominate Stepenuck. Second by Day. All in favor.

Discussion of reports of related committees -- Whenever possible, Day requested that members e-mail reports to the group prior to the meeting.

1. SWRPC – Morrison reported that no meetings have been held.
2. ARLAC – Stepenuck reported that volunteers were trained on May 5. He said that Morrison is involved in lake assessment.
3. OSC – Crowder reported that the Johnson conservation easement survey is well underway. Important upcoming events include the May 30 world premiere of *Swanzy Rural Character*, and Buck and Ike's birthday party on May 31.
4. Growing Our Own – Day reported that some MRHS teachers are interested in spearheading the initiative.
5. Stewards of Mt. Caesar Advisory Committee – Having attended the Committee's recent public information meeting, Stepenuck reported that the Committee took testimony but made no decisions. He said that much of the discussion related to ATV use, and said that people at the meeting felt that the problem could be solved by closing Town land to ATV use. Stepenuck said that those who are interested in keeping Town land open to ATV use should testify to the Board of Selectmen. Crowder reported that a local club is developing policy regarding ATVs, much as snowmobile clubs have in

the past. According to Town Planner Carbonneau, Crowder said, town-owned land can be used by ATVs only if the Board of Selectmen grants permission.

6. Zoning workgroup – Crowder reported that the first meeting of group, formed to consider options for protecting the Route 10 corridor in the vicinity of Yale-Toumey Forest, had been devoted to discussion of the dual goals of supporting economic development and keeping Yale Forest undeveloped to the greatest possible extent. Crowder said that she will continue to advocate for keeping Yale Forest off limits to development, and work to direct commercial/industrial development towards other parts of Swanzey. She said that cartographer Dan Zeh will create maps to help clarify future discussions. Johnson said that Realtors constantly contact Yale with interest in developing the Forest. Crowder said that a zoning change may be an option, but would entail a new kind of district – simply extending the Rural/Agriculture district would afford little protection. The group next meets on May 19 at 4:00.

Treasury Report

Day advised SCC members that the monthly report was not yet available. Crowder said that a quarterly treasury report is adequate.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bardwell Farm retail development (Tax Map 38 Lot 1 and Lot 1-2) correspondence from DES Day reported that DES has requested that the developer provide more information and clarity regarding the planting plan, landscaping, subsurface detention, and drainage analysis.

Johnson expressed concerns regarding proposed DPW cutting of trees in the Ash Hill Road right-of-way, saying that she expects more than 50 trees will be cut, thereby opening up a back road. Johnson said that drivers can choose other routes when conditions are poor.

Based on recent conversation with Town Planner Carbonneau, Crowder said that safety issues have existed on the two-rod road for a long time, all the more so because the road now receives significantly heavier use as a route to the Monadnock Marketplace in Keene. Crowder said that trees will be tagged before cutting, and stone walls will not be moved; the plan calls for removing some ledge. She said that clearing the right-of-way is a condition of the Planning Board's approval of the site plan.

On behalf of the SCC, Day will draft and send an e-mail message to DPW Director Dunham stating that the SCC is interested in being informed when decisions have been made regarding which trees are to be cut, and asking that Dunham tell SCC members what the plans are when he has them available.

SCC members discussed the poor condition of Base Hill Road in Keene.

SCC Ashuelot River Paddle Trip May 16, 9:00 a.m. Day said that he plans to attend, and will make photographs. The trip usually takes less than two hours. Stepenuck said that the New England canoe poling championships will take place in Ashuelot that same day, and encouraged SCC members to attend.

Mill K Plantings development Morrison said that eight students from the MRHS Fish and Game Club planted 600 shrubs, according to SCC recommendations. He said that the Turkey Federation also has supplied plants. Morrison said that last year's plantings are doing well.

Homestead Dam removal permits submitted to DES SCC members reviewed site plans, discussed the dam removal process, and discussed the effect of dam removal on levels of *E. coli*. Stepenuck said that he is concerned that the proposed stream barbs will direct and concentrate the current to the center pier and increase the river velocity. Stepenuck questioned how much of the center of the river will remain open with the proposed barbs in place, saying that he expected that the area where the barbs would be located would quickly fill with debris.

Day said that, at the April meeting, the SCC voted to not send a placeholder letter, but rather to send any comments and concerns to engineer Peter Walker. Stepenuck recommended that Day e-mail DES to report SCC concerns regarding the effect of the stream barbs on the center bridge pier. Stepenuck observed that the

barbs would reduce the stream width by half. Crowder suggested that Day inquire whether the barbs truly are the best approach when a covered bridge is located immediately downstream.

Motion by Morrison that Day draft and send a letter to DES expressing SCC concerns regarding the configuration of the proposed stream barbs, the possibility for increasing midstream velocity by the proposed stream barbs, the possible effect of the anticipated increased stream velocity on the center pier of the covered bridge, the possible function of the barbs as traps for trash, and the possibility that the barbs may create hazards for boaters. Second by Stepenuck. All in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Applications and permits: none

Projects

1. *Mt. Cresson trailwork and Nikofoarakis Eagle Scout project* Day proposed that SCC members walk the trail with Nikofoarakis to determine what he might do, what trailwrights might do, and what SCC members themselves might do. SCC members determined to conduct the walk on May 27 at 4:00. Day will contact Nikofoarakis.
2. *Let's Go Fishing* Morrison said that he finished training on Saturday to conduct the Fish & Game program for children and adults. He outlined the curriculum, and said that eight hours of classroom time are presented in two-hour sessions; participants spend four hours of field trip. Morrison will contact MRHS principal Pickering to ask for approval to conduct the free program, possibly in July.
3. *Conservation Camp* SCC members discussed how best to handle timing of payment of the SCC's \$400 contribution to sponsor a camper, and accounting of the total payment. **Motion** by Morrison that the SCC pay the \$400 SCC portion of the tuition by June 1, and to request that the sponsored camper's parents make out the \$50 deposit check to the camp and submit it to Morrison for him to deliver. Second by Day. All in favor.

Mail and upcoming conferences, sessions

Day alerted members to receipt of various items of mail.

MINUTES March 9, 2009 regular meeting, April 14, 2009 regular meeting, May 4, 2009 visioning retreat

Regarding the March 9, 2009 minutes, Stepenuck's points and comments included the following: Recording Secretary Barlow gave erroneous advice to the SCC; the terms of SCC officers do not expire at Town meeting; in deference to Johnson and Morrison, who had had to leave the March meeting before it ended, the group had moved by consensus to hold election of officers in April; the April minutes failed to indicate the thought to move the election of officers to the April meeting.

Motion by Morrison to correct the minutes of March 9, 2009 to show that election of officers was deferred until April. Second by Coburn. All in favor.

Motion by Morrison to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2009 regular meeting. Second by Goodrich. All in favor (Crowder, Stepenuck abstained).

Day said that no action was officially taken at the visioning retreat.

Motion by Morrison to approve the minutes of the May 4, 2009 meeting. Second by Johnson. All in favor (Crowder abstained).

OTHER BUSINESS AS MIGHT ARISE

Perley Swett hike in Stoddard, May 16 Crowder reported that the event is scheduled.

Burn exercise of old Page house on Route 32 Crowder discussed her concerns, shared by Open Space Committee members and Town Planner Carbonneau, that maple trees adjacent to the structure likely will be damaged by the fire. Crowder said that two experts consulted by e-mail had confirmed Carbonneau's assessment that disfigurement likely could result from the intense heat. Crowder said that the trees are part of

the Moore Nanotechnology Systems landscaping plan, and are valued by business owner Len Chaloux. SCC members said they had no former knowledge of Fire Chief Skantze's intention to conduct the burn exercise.

Crowder proposed drafting and sending an e-mail message to Skantze (copied to Len Chaloux) to alert him to the likely damage to the maple trees, request that he inspect the trees that were damaged by the burn exercise at the former Bardwell Farm, and request that he take precautions to prevent similar damage to the trees at the Moore Nanotechnology site.

Motion by Day to authorize Crowder to prepare the e-mail message on behalf of the SCC. Second by Morrison. All in favor.

Beauregard subdivision driveway installation Goodrich raised questions regarding approval of the subdivision, legal removal of rubbish, and whether a State wetlands permit had been required. SCC members discussed these topics, as well as the timing of the subdivision. Day said he will review DES information.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Morrison. Second by Goodrich. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Reck Barlow
Recording Secretary