

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire  
**Conservation Commission Meeting**  
Meeting Minutes – December 1, 2014

*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 Swanzey Conservation Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Stephen Stepenuck at 4:06 p.m. Committee Members Present: Stephen Stepenuck, Gary Coburn, Wally Smith, Ric Dell’Erba, Jeanette Cook, and Jane Johnson.

**ABSENT**

Robert Goodrich, Mike Morrison.

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe

**MINUTES**

- Minutes of November 3, 2014 were considered. **Motion** by Smith to approve the Minutes of November 3, 2014. There was a second from Coburn. All were in favor except Cook and Stepenuck who abstained. **Motion passed.**
- Minutes of October 6, 2014 were deferred.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Proposed New Fire Station**

O’Keefe began a discussion regarding written feedback from the Conservation Commission that is required by RSA 41:14-a relative to possible land acquisition of a parcel of land located on Safford Drive for a proposed new Fire Station. He explained the timing needed for a response from the Conservation Commission that must be provided before the Selectman can proceed with two public hearings prior to the intended conveyances.

O’Keefe quoted some statistics from the response call study for the Fire Department that was completed for the Capital Improvements Program Committee. He said the study showed that many calls are coming in from North Swanzey which a station on Safford Drive could better serve. O’Keefe noted the site has both sewer and water. He also noted new Fire Station will be subject to a bond hearing. He provided to the members of the Commission a sketch of a site plan for the Fire Station. There was a discussion about a pond that was near to the site in the past and that someone had proposed land to be donated to the Town for a small park with the pond near to the proposed site.

Smith asked if the site is within a flood zone and O’Keefe said it is not. Smith pointed out the land is being donated and Johnson mentioned that a Fire Station in that location is a benefit to the economic development district. Smith mentioned that homeowners also may see some insurance benefits when a new Fire Station is built.

O'Keefe reviewed the proposed design of the Fire Station with the Commission members. He mentioned the site is 3 acres.

Chair asked for a motion in support of the proposed acquisition.

Smith **moved** to support the Selectmen's intention to acquire property located on Safford Drive at Tax Map 19, Lot 97-5, contingent on getting a positive bond vote, second by Johnson. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

O'Keefe explained the schedule for public hearings and there was a discussion about funding for the proposed project. There was a discussion about the fact that the Town has not kept up with the needs to upgrade facilities and will need to respond to safety and crowding issues at those facilities.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Illegal Dumping Ordinance Update**

O'Keefe said that the Selectmen will be reviewing some text for a Warrant Article at the meeting Tuesday night, December 2, 2014. There was a discussion about the fines that might be generated by the Ordinance and some changes that the State Legislature might make in the current law to enable towns to collect at least some of the fines generated by enforcement of illegal dumping.

O'Keefe left the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

#### **Mt. Cresson Well House Repair Work**

Stepenuck said he has finished the planks for repair of the well house. He asked for a work day to do the repairs. He estimated about a half day of work would be sufficient for now and in the spring schedule a regular work day to complete the job. Stepenuck mentioned that the trail needs more work including refreshing the blazes, which could also be worked on in the spring. He also mentioned signs need to be re-positioned. Stepenuck mentioned that the Open Space Committee (OSC) put a trail-map box at the trailhead with brochures in it. He noted directions were still incorrect in the brochure, but also there was text explaining some history of the area including a farmer's right to a spring and reservoir which might be the reason for the well house that is in need of repair. Cook offered to work on a title search to clear up the issue; she said she needed an address to work with. Stepenuck said he could provide her with a Tax Assessor's map with a Lot number.

Stepenuck said he would attempt to update Steve Walker at the State of New Hampshire regarding past-due reports. The members also agreed on December 13, 2014 at 9:30 a.m. for a date and time to walk the boundaries of the land with Wayne Young for the purpose of discussing the forestry plan and possibly making recommendations for removing some of the trees. Stepenuck suggested car-pooling from Town Hall since parking spaces are limited at the trailhead.

#### **Expense Report Review**

Stepenuck reviewed the 2014 Expense Report with the members and mentioned that the Commission spent more than \$4000 this year. \$1300 was spent on invasive species removal alone but that cost won't be repeated in 2015. He asked for reminders from the Committee members to reduce spending on phosphorescence testing since these tests are running at more than \$200 each time they are done. There was discussion on what is learned from the test results and it was agreed that the tests do not need to

be performed every month. It was also agreed that the Commission will continue to support student scholarships.

Coburn left the meeting at 5:03 p.m.

### **NHACC Questionnaire**

Stepenuck noted the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions questionnaire needs to be responded to by the members. Smith mentioned the need for regional meetings within the state to encourage participation. Stepenuck asked the members to send their responses to the questionnaire to him.

### **Access to Honey Hill**

Johnson updated the members regarding an invitation to Tina LaBarre to meet with the Commission for an open discussion for access to Honey Hill. She said she will continue to work this issue with the idea of inviting LaBarre to be present in February 2015.

### **Website**

Discussion was held regarding creation of a more comprehensive website for the Conservation Commission. It was noted that Coleen Birmingham was to be present to discuss this further, but no one reminded her of the meeting. There was agreement to ask her to plan to be at the January meeting. There was also a discussion about topics to put on the website, including contact information for inquiries.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Tree Cutting and Dumping**

Johnson reported that there is cutting going on at Base Hill Road and someone is filling in wetlands on the swampy side of the road. She also reported some dumping occurring on the old Route 10 off Sawyer's Crossing Road. There was a discussion about fees charged at the Recycling Center for dumping household goods and tires; it was suggested that folks might bring these items to the Center if fees were not charged. However, Cook mentioned that her property has many buried items that were dumped there in the past when there was no Recycling Center or fees. Discussion occurred regarding Yale Forest land and dumping that occurs on that land. There was also some discussion regarding the lack of enforcement for illegal dumping and how a Town ordinance might discourage dumping.

### **REPORTS**

- **ARLAC** – no report. Stepenuck displayed the management plan for the river, with an update for 2011. It contained an Atlas of the Ashuelot River. He gave the plan to Cook.
- **Open Space Committee (OSC)** – Bernard mentioned that the OSC will hold a planning session for the year at a retreat scheduled for a Saturday in January 2015.
- **Annual Report** – Stepenuck said he would be coming up with a draft for this with input from the members.
- **SWRP-NRC** – no report

**Mail**

**Shoreland Impact Permit**

Stepenuck noted receiving a copy of a Shoreland Impact Permit issued to Dopeslap LLC for property located at 125 Pine Street Swanzey, which was approved by the Planning Board. The letter was informational in regard to issuing the permit.

**Cheshire County Conservation District Meeting**

Stepenuck also reviewed with the members a postcard sent out by the Cheshire County Conservation District about their meeting Tuesday, December 9, 2014, 6-8:30 p.m. \$20 per person.

**Newsletters were also received**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Adjournment** – motion to adjourn by Johnson with a second from Smith. All were in favor. Adjournment occurred at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary