

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes – January 5, 2015

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 Chair Robert Goodrich at 4:04 p.m. Committee Members Present: Gary Coburn, Wally Smith, Mike Morrison, Stephen Stepenuck and Jane Johnson.

ABSENT

Ric Dell’Erba, Jeanette Cook.

OTHERS PRESENT

Assessing Coordinator Coleen Birmingham, Residents Tina LaBarre and Wayne Young

MINUTES

- Minutes of December 1, 2014 were considered. **Motion** by Smith to approve the Minutes of December 1, 2014. There was a second from Coburn. Discussion: it was noted that “phosphorous” was spelled incorrectly on page 2 and needed to be corrected to “phosphorus”. All were in favor with change as noted except Goodrich and Morrison who abstained. **Motion passed.**
- Minutes of October 6, 2014 were deferred.

OLD BUSINESS

Website Update

Coleen Birmingham met with the Commission regarding possible changes to the Conservation Commission a page on the Town website. She provided some samples of other Conservation Commission pages from other towns. She suggested including on the website expiration dates for terms of members and contact information for Committee members. She also suggested adding photos to the website to enliven it. There was a discussion about getting the attention of residents for the Commission website. Birmingham mentioned using the signboard in front of Town Hall to announce news on the Conservation Commission website. Stepenuck volunteered to be the point person on the Commission to interact with Birmingham for making improvements to the Conservation Commission page on the Town of Swanzey website. Birmingham left at 4:16 p.m.

Access to Honey Hill

Tina LaBarre met with the Commission to discuss access to Honey Hill Conservation Area via the LaBarre property. Discussion was held regarding the possibility of a few parking spaces which would be safer for hikers to access Honey Hill Conservation Area than the current parking area. Stepenuck pointed out the location of Town land and LaBarre mentioned that the area where parking is being considered is sometimes wet. Stepenuck said the Commission hoped a dry section of land could be determined for a couple of cars. Morrison suggested that the Commission walk the area with LaBarre to review possible parking spots. There was a discussion about the gates put up by LaBarre. LaBarre said that she and her

husband are open to the idea of a small parking area and are willing to do a site walk with the Commission when Mr. LaBarre is available. A decision was made to do the site walk on Saturday, January 17, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. LaBarre left the meeting at 4:47 p.m.

Mt. Cresson

Wayne Young met with the Commission to discuss Mt. Cresson land and the trail. Young provided a map of the mountain. Young said the south end could use some attention and he mentioned areas where a trail might be added. Stepenuck suggested a perimeter trail might be possible which could be tied in to the existing trail. Young spoke about a natural stand of trees of about 28 acres which he suggested should remain as is since the soil type is not very conducive to good tree growth. He said there is a lot of hemlock in the area and the hardwoods are somewhat stunted. Young said in the past he suggested a different parking area be considered that would give easier access to the ledges. Young offered to walk the area with Commission members. Smith suggested waiting until springtime, and members agreed to plan for a tentative March 14, 2015 walk assuming conditions will be suitable.

There was a discussion about trimming the trees around the light at the top of the mountain which would open up the view. Johnson mentioned talking to the City of Keene Airport folks in order to make the light more visible to those who might navigate by it. Young left the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

2014 Annual Report

Stepenuck provided text for the Conservation Commission Annual Report for review by the members. Smith pointed to some changes needed in the verbiage referencing the illegal dumping ordinance. Morrison made a comment about the reference to camp scholarships. Johnson volunteered to put together an application for camp scholarships for 2015 so as to improve the submissions for the scholarships.

NEW BUSINESS

Illegal Dumping Ordinance

Smith passed out a copy of the ordinance as approved by the Board of Selectmen. It will be included in the Warrant Article for 2015. Smith spoke about the need for signs, if the Article is approved. Stepenuck said he liked the sign that states "Dumping Costs You". Smith was thanked by the members of the Commission for his work.

Smith mentioned that trails should be accessible for families and not as steep as some of them are.

Expenditure Report

Goodrich said that Bookkeeper Theresa Louder said that the Commission doesn't actually have a budget. Stepenuck said there are a Land Acquisition Fund and a Conservation Fund which has been accessible for funding projects in the past. Stepenuck said he would like to communicate with the Board of Selectmen regarding the reductions in expenses that won't occur in 2015. At least \$2,000 of the \$4,500 won't be repeated in 2015.

Legislature Action

Johnson spoke about the bills initiated by Representative Jim McConnell in the State Legislature regarding MTBE.

REPORTS

- **ARLAC** – no report – Stepenuck said the second position is still open and it was thought that Ric Dell’Erba was interested in pursuing that position. Stepenuck and Morrison both volunteered to try to reach Dell’Erba to ask him if he intended to follow up with applying for the position.
- **Open Space Committee (OSC)** – Bernard informed the Commission that the OSC will be having a retreat to plan for activities and events for 2015.
- **SWRP-NRC** – nothing to report

Mail

- Department of Environmental Services provided the Commission a copy of an application for a new septic system which was not accepted due to lack of completion of the application.
- Field Visit Reports for Honey Hill and Mt. Cresson Conservation areas were received from Steve Walker. There was a discussion about the Mt. Cresson report. Morrison raised the issue of how the Conservation Commission communicates with the Conservation Land Stewardship Program.

Stepenuck mentioned that it might be a good idea to have a member who is a member of both Open Space Committee and Conservation Commission at meetings to ensure continued communication between the two groups.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment – motion to adjourn by Morrison with a second from Smith. All were in favor. Adjournment occurred at 6:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary