

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes – April 6, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Swanzey Conservation Commission was called to order by Chair Jeanette Cook at 4:00 p.m. at Swanzey Town Hall. Committee Members Present: Gary Coburn, Wally Smith, Bob Goodrich, Mike Morrison, Stephen Stepenuck, Ric Dell’Erba and Jane Johnson.

ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Christopher A. Guida, CSS, CWS, Project Manager with Fieldstone Land Consultants, Amanda Littleton and John Treat from the Cheshire County Conservation District (CCCD).

MINUTES

- Minutes of March 16, 2015 were considered. **Motion** by Smith to approve the Minutes of March 16, 2015 with change to attendance showing that Goodrich was not present and Johnson was not present. There was a second from Morrison. All were in favor except Johnson and Goodrich who both abstained. **Motion passed.**

CONCERNS

Renewal of Gravel Pit Permit

The first item discussed was a proposed extension on the permit for a gravel pit which lies in both Swanzey and Winchester on NH Route 10. The request for permit extension will be addressed by the Planning Board in a Public Hearing on April 23, 2015. Johnson mentioned that the Public Hearing at Winchester is to be held tonight. Johnson said she spoke to Planning and Community Development Director Sara Carbonneau about the Conservation Commission being involved in the process since water and conservation is involved. She asked the Commission members to consider attending the Public Hearing and contribute to the issues/questions. Johnson spoke about neighbors who have complained about noise from the site and there have been issues with blasting that has occurred on the site. Discussion also occurred about the possibility of the site being a Brownfield in the past. Morrison asked about whether the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) has had to issue a wetlands permit.

Smith made a **motion** that the Conservation Commission not support approving a renewal permit for a gravel pit located on NH Route 10 which is currently seeking approval from the Swanzey Planning Board since there isn’t enough information provided. There was a second to the motion by Stepenuck, and all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

NEW BUSINESS

Cheshire County Conservation District

Littleton did a PowerPoint presentation showing some of the work that is being done by the CCCD. She also passed out brochures on Equipment Rentals provided by the CCCD. Littleton provided some rental pricing. For example, Skidder Bridges rent for \$100.00 per month. Rental rates do not include delivery.

She spoke about helping farmers with grants, the CCCD pollinator initiative, and the Falls Brook restoration being planned in Swanzey to open up fish habitat many miles upstream of the Ashuelot River. She spoke about being part of the State of New Hampshire, but funded by Cheshire County, with the office located in Walpole, NH. The proposal is to do the Falls Brook restoration during the summer of 2015 when the water level is low. She mentioned that the CCCD is already working with the Swanzey Public Works Department. She asked the Commission to concur on approval on the wetland permit for this project once the permit is available.

Littleton acknowledged that part of her job is putting together grant proposals. Smith asked if the Commission could submit priorities to the CCCD and get help from them for grants, and Littleton said the CCCD would be glad to assist in writing a grant for a fee. Morrison raised the issue of the Ashuelot River monitoring, in particular the South Branch, and said that testing funds are an issue.

Littleton also spoke about promoting farms in the area and stated the CCCD also provides an aggregation and distribution service for fruits, vegetables, dairy and grains. Littleton and Treat left at 4:51 p.m.

Retaining Wall project on Swanzey Lake

Christopher A. Guida, CSS, CWS, Project Manager with Fieldstone Land Consultants met with the Commission. He spoke about a wooden retaining wall on Swanzey Lake that needs to be replaced on property owned by Jonathan Hoden at 196 East Shore Road. Hoden's initial Permit by Notification request was rejected by DES originally because he had not planned to do a replacement in kind. Hoden is proposing a 45 foot stone retaining wall for deck and access to his dock. The deck is failing as well as the wall. The wall is proposed to be fieldstone. The plan is not to encroach into the lake during construction. Morrison pointed out that the bank would be stabilized by the wall.

Discussion occurred regarding comments by the Commission on the permit application. Discussion occurred about waiving the right to comment in the future. It was determined that the project consists of 175 square feet (45 X 5 feet). Smith suggested comments be submitted to the Chair by next week. Guida said that the review period is 30 days for the Commission to comment on the proposed plan. Discussion occurred regarding the possibility that the finished project not comply with the plan and how that would invalidate the permit. Cook asked the members for a decision. Morrison said this project would be an improvement. Goodrich agreed.

Morrison **moved** to approve the plans by Fieldstone Land Consultants representing the proposed project for replacing a wooden retaining wall with a 175 square foot stone wall on property owned by Jonathan Hoden at 196 East Shore Road on Swanzey Lake, second by Smith; all were in favor except for Stepenuck who abstained. ***Motion passed.***

Smith asked if Guida would inform the Commission once the project begins. Six copies of the project plans were provided by Guida, which were signed by the Chair. Stepenuck mentioned that the Commission could provide a "No Comment", which would not waive the right to intervene. Four copies of the plan remained with the Conservation Commission and one copy was left for the Town.

Ashuelot River Testing Presentation

Stepenuck spoke about the session; no members of the public attended.

Logging Project in West Swanzey downstream from the Thompson Bridge

Stepenuck spoke about Resident Barbara Skuly researching a local logging project. He said she was informed by the New Hampshire Agriculture Department that not much could be done about the logging operation since it is an agriculture project. There was a discussion about the forester on the project not being a licensed forester. Morrison suggested that the shoreland protection requirements were seemingly dismissed by the Department of Agriculture.

Smith **moved** to continue to monitor the logging project in West Swanzey downstream from the Thompson Bridge; there was a second by Goodrich, all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

There was a brief discussion about making an official complaint with NH DES regarding the project.

Johnson left the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Anti-Dumping Ordinance

Smith suggested that the Commission not support future cleanups until there is an ordinance in place for illegal dumping. Stepenuck said a State law exists but it is not being enforced.

Smith **moved** to conduct the 2015 roadside cleanup but to no longer support future cleanups without an illegal dumping Town ordinance in place. Morrison seconded the motion. Discussion occurred about whether this is a good idea or not. Dell'Erba abstained and Stepenuck abstained. Cook, Smith, Goodrich, and Morrison were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Roadside Cleanup

Dell'Erba said he has the signs for the event and suggested rubber gloves for volunteers be purchased again for the event.

Motion by Stepenuck to fund 20 pairs of rubber gloves to distribute to volunteers for up to \$50.00, second by Goodrich, and all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Discussion occurred regarding publicity. Morrison suggested event news on the Environmental page on Monday's Sentinel newspaper. Coburn suggested that the sign outside Town Hall needs to be utilized. Stepenuck suggested contacting Public Works Director Lee Dunham for pick up. April 18, 2015 is the date for the cleanup with a start time of 9:00 a.m. Dell'Erba determined there were two hundred bags. Smith volunteered to be at Town Hall to welcome volunteers and Goodrich also will be at Town Hall. Vice Chair Smith will obtain a key to open Town Hall. Morrison volunteered to contact the Shopper News, the Sentinel and a local radio station. Stepenuck volunteered to obtain the Town map from Sara Carbonneau. Discussion occurred about asking the Selectmen to provide bottled water to volunteers. Next meeting will be May 4, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

Resignation of the Chair as of April 10, 2015

Cook informed the Commission that she is resigning as of April 10, 2015 due to family and work issues. She said that she informed Town Administrator Shane O'Keefe that she will be leaving. Cook said that

she would like to be able to stay on the Commission, but she cannot remain as a member. Vice Chair Smith will take over as Chair temporarily.

ADJOURNMENT

There was a motion to adjourn by Morrison with a second from Stepenuck. All were in favor. Adjournment occurred at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Beverly Bernard".

Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary