

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Swanzey Conservation Commission was called to order by Chair Wally Smith at 4:01 p.m. at Swanzey Town Hall. Committee Members Present: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Stepenuck, Bob Goodrich, Mike Morrison, Jane Johnson, Ric Dell’Erba and Beverly Bernard.

**ABSENT**

None

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Chair of the Open Space Committee Victoria Ames, Director of Planning and Community of Development Sara Carbonneau.

**MINUTES**

- Minutes of September 21, 2015 were considered. **Motion** by Morrison to approve the Minutes of September 21, 2015 with change on page 4 to change to “decided to take no action after discussion”. There was a second from Goodrich. All were in favor except Johnson who abstained. **Motion passed.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Subdivision at Goodell and Old Homestead Highway/State Route 32** – the Commission members reviewed the plans for the subdivision. Carbonneau mentioned that the Planning Board will be discussing the plans, including run-off of water on the property. She said that there should be no increase in run-off. Johnson mentioned that the State of New Hampshire will have to deal with the water run-off if the run-off is toward State Route 32. Concern is run-off. Carbonneau confirmed that the minimum lot size is 1 acre in the Residential District. Goodrich asked about required road frontage for lots. Carbonneau said the driveways on Old Homestead Highway will serve three lots, including the rear lots. She said that rear lots must have at least 50 feet on the road. Back lots must be at least three (3) acres according to Carbonneau. Morrison said he would be concerned about impact of ten wells on the existing aquifer of ten. A concern was also expressed about the impact of leach fields on aquifer.

Johnson mentioned that the Planning Board could get confirmation that there is no impact to wetlands. October 22, 2015 is the Public Hearing. Morrison offered to attend the Public Hearing. Dell’Erba suggested a concern about taking down of trees on the property which is currently wooded.

**New Grant Editing and Review Services from NHAAC (Yale Forest Dept. - Jane)**

Johnson spoke about the size of the forest and information that is provided on the Yale University website. Yale School Forests has a phone number that Johnson provided. She said that Nicholas Coates has a new grant writing and review service. There was a discussion about the possibilities of using this service for future grants that the Commission might be applying for. There was a discussion about the Mitchell gravel pit and the idea of possibly sponsoring an aquifer ordinance for the Town.

Smith suggested that perhaps once a year there could be contact with Yale University. Stepenuck said there had been contact in the past with Yale, from the Forestry Division. Johnson said she would approve keeping in contact with the Yale folks. By consensus, the Commission agreed to keep in touch with Yale Forestry Division, and Johnson will be the main contact person. She said she would research someone at Yale to communicate with. The following is the contact information for the Yale Forestry Department:

Yale School Forests  
360 Prospect Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
203-432-5134 voice – 203-432-3809 fax

#### **Solar Power - Potential Energy Committee initiative**

Smith passed out information about a Webinar: *Launch Your Own Solarize Campaign* which will be held on October 14 from noon – 1 p.m. Smith also spoke about the article “Solarizing New Hampshire’s Upper Valley and Beyond”. The article spoke about a \$20,000 up front cost for installing solar panels and the suggestion that home equity loans could provide the financing. It also referred to the need for volunteers to advocate for solar power. Smith and Bernard both agreed that the cost was prohibitive for most Swanzey residents. Stepenuck said he was interested in solar, but he felt that it seemed as though a monopoly were being established. There was a brief discussion about solar installations and whether or not there is a tax benefit. Stepenuck mentioned that there have been rebates in place to help with the costs.

Johnson moved to table the topic until after the Webinar, Morrison seconded the motion, and all were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

#### **Japanese Knotweed**

Smith said that an email came from Jeannette Cook York about a problem with Japanese Knotweed on her property. Goodrich mentioned that the Commission has reviewed the problem and spent hours on thinking about how to deal with it. He noted the roots spread beneath soil. Johnson said she thought the best option would be to have it professionally sprayed. There was a discussion about using different kinds of substances to kill the plants. Dell’Erba recommended rock salt as a possible control. He said putting the rock salt on the roots will kill the roots. Morrison said that it is also possible to put black plastic on the weed to kill it. Stepenuck also agreed that hiring a professional might be the best option and it was agreed that the Commission would make that suggestion to landowners who ask about the problem in the future.

#### **Muster property field walk with Steve Roberge - Inspection Schedule (Steve)**

Possible dates for the walk were discussed and the following was agreed upon:

October 19, 2015 – at 3 p.m. and meet at the Muster Field parking lot. Stepenuck will confirm that time and date with Steve Roberge. Smith said he would contact Director of Department of Public Works Lee Dunham and let him know. Bernard will make sure notice is done.

**Ryan Owens Executive Director Monadnock Conservancy – Conservation Presentation November 2<sup>nd</sup>;**  
4-5PM (Confirmation)

Smith said that Owens has offered this time for the meeting which is our regular meeting date and time. Bernard will send out a meeting note to other Boards and Committees to invite them to attend.

Dell'Erba left the meeting at 5:04 p.m.

**Wayne Young trail walk – Commission meeting invitation; potential proposal**

It was noted that Mr. Young will meet with the Commission on November 2, 2015.

**Annual Report to be included in Town Report due January 11<sup>th</sup> (Need Volunteer)**

Smith pointed to the deadline for the Annual Report, which is January 11, 2016. Smith asked for a volunteer. Morrison and Stepenuck volunteered to work on it. They will make a draft and review the draft with the Commission.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Ashuelot River Landing – Bergeron Project (Status)**

Stepenuck said he hasn't been able to get in touch with Bergeron to follow up on his proposed project. There was discussion about the clean-up of the Ashuelot River and how much trash was picked up by the participating canoes. Discussion was held about the many dumped tires which could not be picked up by canoe.

**Open Space Rotation Assignments - (October - Morrison, November - Johnson, December – Bernard)**

Morrison confirmed his attendance for October 14, 2015 at 5 p.m.

**Aquifer concerns (Discussion)**

There was a discussion about a potential ordinance and an email from Richard Scaramelli was reviewed by the members pertinent to an effort to introduce the idea of an aquifer ordinance in the past. Scaramelli said the idea didn't pass muster with the Planning Board then (approximately 1999). Bernard volunteered to research the Winchester Aquifer Ordinance and bring some ideas back to the Commission. Smith suggested the possibility of reproducing *the Swanzey Groundwater: Vital, Valuable, Vulnerable* brochure after updating. Smith suggested keeping this as a topic for next year. Revisit is in December.

**Anti-Dumping Ordinance – Status (Beverly/Wally)**

Bernard spoke about two possible wordings. Morrison suggested a short version is preferred. Smith noted that the vote was 4-1 in favor to study the idea further so it seems residents would be generally in favor. It was suggested to use the original Town Meeting Article and to add "by unauthorized persons" in order to address the issue of use of personal property. The Commission agreed.

**Cresson/Thompson Bridge inspections (Steve Pytlik) Results, if available (Wally)**

Smith said he spoke to Pytlik on the phone and Pytlik said he is focused on paying projects right now and unable to give the Commission a report on his inspections.

**REPORTS**

**ARLAC**

Stepenuck spoke about the river clean-up.

### **Open Space**

Ames spoke about the Tom Wessel's talk which was well attended. She said on October 21, 2015, there will be a lecture at Cutler School about New England stone walls.

### **Selectmen**

Smith spoke about the work on the Municipal Facilities Review Committee for the Fire Station, Police Station addition, new roof and new electrical at the Recycling Center, and the salt shed for the DPW, which will be next year.

### **Complete Streets**

Johnson spoke about Complete Streets and her doubt about whether it works for Swanzey. She also spoke about items being put out on the edge of the highway by local businesses. She said it distracts from the appeal of the Town on State Route 10.

### **Land Acquisition Account Update**

Smith spoke about Conservation Commission Land Acquisition account and the amount of dollars in the account.

### **MAIL**

Smith provided a copy of the Permit granted by New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) for Jeannette M. Cook/York to cut trees on her property.

Next Meeting Date: November 2, 2015

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary