

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes – November 2, 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 Wally Smith at 4:00 p.m. at Swanzey Town Hall. Committee Members Present: Chair Smith, Bob Goodrich, Mike Morrison, Jane Johnson and Beverly Bernard.

ABSENT

Ric Dell'Erba, Steve Stepenuck

OTHERS PRESENT

Monadnock Conservancy Executive Director Ryan Owens, Open Space Committee Chair Victoria Ames, Open Space Committee member Jeanne Thieme, Resident Mike Thieme, Attorney Tenley Callaghan, Director of Planning and Community Development Sara Carbonneau, Open Space Committee members Karen Sielke, Sharon Greatbatch, and Theresa DiLuzio and Selectman Bill Hutwelker.

MINUTES

- Minutes of October 5, 2015 were considered. **Motion** by Morrison to approve the Minutes of October 5, 2015. There was a second from Johnson. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

PRESENTATION

Smith introduced the Chair of the Open Space Committee Victoria Ames, who introduced Ryan Owens. Monadnock Conservancy Executive Director Owens gave a presentation to members of the Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee and other interested persons. He provided some history of the organization and then focused on the shift in emphasis for conservation efforts toward more culturally aligned objectives.

All left the meeting at 5:15 p.m. except for Ames and Callaghan who remained.

NEW BUSINESS

Haley Park Sewer Line Easement

Attorney Callaghan spoke about the requirement for a sewer easement for the 90 unit apartment complex known as Haley Park that was never actually recorded when approval for the project occurred in 2002. The easement provides access to sewer pipe installation that has been there for more ten years. She asked that the Commission approve the easement.

Motion was made by Bernard to recommend to the Board of Selectmen to convey the sewer easement for Haley Park, there was second by Morrison and all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Discussion on lack of Quorum – Explore Alternatives

Smith broached the subject of how to manage issues when there is not a quorum. Smith suggested the members consider granting permission to the Chair to approve a request when the members cannot make meeting to consider the request.

Muster Field Next Steps – Chain Fencing Proposal

Smith noted that Forester Steve Roberge did not attend the meeting because he had not been given a firm date. Smith spoke about the parking area and suggested a chain/cable between two posts might be considered to keep cars from going further down the dirt road to the river since the river bank is eroding.

Motion was made by Morrison put up chain/cable barrier across the dirt road beyond the parking area with a sign that states that visitors should not to drive beyond this point due to safety concerns. There was a second by Johnson, and all were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Mitchell Sand and Gravel – Potential Expansion

Discussion was held regarding the meeting of the Winchester Planning Board on Monday, November 2, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. to consider the application for Mitchell Sand and Gravel pit expansion which is partially in Winchester and partially in Swanzey. Morrison asked if they need a New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) permit. Johnson noted that Engineer Rob Hitchcock spoke at a previous meeting of the Planning Board about lowering the pit to 80 feet. Discussion was held about the pit being of solid rock. Morrison suggested calling NH DES about the increase in depth. Smith suggested waiting for the result of the Winchester meeting.

Boes Subdivision – Planning Board Results

Smith informed the members that the Planning Board approved a ten-lot subdivision requested by Karl Boes. Concern was ten septic systems, and he said he was told that the State of New Hampshire would handle it and therefore was not a concern.

OLD BUSINESS

Aquifer Concerns

Johnson said she did some research regarding aquifers. Sole Source Aquifers are protected by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and no aquifers in New Hampshire are designated that title. Morrison said the NH DES is the State of New Hampshire agency that represents the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Bernard asked what level of protection is involved by being a Sole Source Aquifer. EPA reviews proposed projects – Bernard will also do some research.

Solar Power – Potential Energy Committee Initiative

Smith spoke about the webinar that was held regarding solar power – which needs a volunteer committee to select an installer, and promote solar power. He said the major barrier is the cost. Home owners need to get a loan and the money you save pays for the installation over time. \$23,000 is the cost for an average system and it takes ten to twelve years to breakeven point. He also noted that without credits that are currently available, but may not be for long, the cost would be higher. Smith said that the Conservation Commission objectives do not include promoting solar power. Bernard said she is not in favor of forming a committee by the Conservation Commission since resources are limited and promoting solar power is not within the scope of our objectives.

Open Space Committee Rotation

November Johnson, December Bernard, Smith will participate in January.

Silvio Conte Land

Johnson will send material to the members to consider for the next meeting.

Anti-Dumping Ordinance

Smith spoke about the meeting with the Board of Selectmen, who approve moving forward. The language will be considered by Town Counsel.

Annual Report Reminder

Smith suggested Morrison give Stepenuck a call to discuss writing up the report.

Falls Brook Update

Smith updated the members regarding a delay in the work to be done. Construction is now planned to begin next summer.

Ashuelot River Landing – Bergeron Project Status

The members agreed to remove this item from any further consideration.

REPORTS

ARLAC

Natural Resources Committee will be meeting and Morrison will report next month.

Open Space

Ames thanked the Commission for hosting Ryan Owens and his presentation.

Keene State Geography Students

Smith spoke about the projects the students are working on including mapping trails and Ames added that a map might include sidewalks. She also said they would be willing to maintain the maps. They will be giving their final report on December 10, 2015, which is a Thursday, at 6:00 p.m. It was thought that they are presenting it to the Planning Board.

MAIL

Mail from NH DES – the letter stated that the granite steps at the West Swanzey Park at the Thompson Bridge may remain. The letter states that NH DES has decided to not seek further action regarding the stairs but that they will re-visit the area in 2016 to determine that the vegetation has been allowed to grow to a minimum of three feet in height and further erosion around the stairs in the bank has not occurred.

Next Meeting Date: December 7, 2015 – Smith will not be present and he asked if Stepenuck was unavailable, Johnson might be willing to conduct the meeting and she agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

There was a **motion** to adjourn by Morrison with a second from Goodrich. All were in favor. Adjournment occurred at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary