

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes – January 6, 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 Chair Robert Goodrich at 4:02 p.m. Committee Members Present: Wally Smith, Jane B. Johnson, Stephen Stepenuck, Mike Morrison, and Gary Coburn.

ABSENT

Deb Crowder, Ric Dell'Erba

OTHERS PRESENT

Walter Weeks

MINUTES

Minutes of December 2, 2013 were discussed for some time. Motion by Smith to accept the minutes of December 2, 2013 with a second by Stepenuck. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

OTHER MATTERS

State of New Hampshire House of Representatives Bills of Interest

Johnson referred to a copy of the State House of Representatives "House Record" that she brought with her to the meeting. She reported on Bill HB388 FNL – initiated by the Resources Committee and Bill HB397 which also came out of the Resources Committee relative to State aid for wastewater and public supply projects. She also referred to HB545 regarding rafting of boats.

Relocation of Trail between Dickinson Property and the Muster Property to Correct Trail Erosion

Stepenuck reported on his call to the State of New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) regarding whether or not a wetlands permit will be needed (and not a Shoreland permit) to relocate and fix the trail between the Dickinson property and the Muster property. He also discussed something called a "trail" permit, which has a simple form to fill out, and which may be suitable for the planned work. Weeks asked about parking in the area.

Stepenuck **moved** to relocate the existing trail away from the river bank as appropriate and make parking space available at the Muster property for public access to the Dickinson property. Second by Smith. Discussion was held about cutting trees in the area for parking, which would be well over 50 feet from the river bed. Stepenuck said that all is needed is a bit of trimming to get three or four vehicles into the space. Stepenuck said that if a permit is needed, then perhaps a sketch could be made of the plan and photos can be submitted regarding the sink hole. This would support of the work that needs to be done: relocate the trail away from the river edge and expand the parking area by a few feet on each side for minimum impact. Chair called for a vote and all were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Weeks said to make sure the Town knows that he is willing to do the work necessary to complete the job above as a volunteer. He left 4:23 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

Mail

The Chair reported mail from Jen Drociak, Compliance Specialist from DES regarding a gazebo built on property at 81 Wilson Pond Road close to the water. The document stated that corrections have been made to the satisfaction of DES.

Chair Goodrich also reported mail from DES regarding a Shoreland Impact permit has been issued to Arnie Filipi for property on Route 32, map 31, lot26, where a driveway was going to impact the nearby river.

OLD BUSINESS

Riley Property Sign

Coburn mentioned the sign for the Riley property and the fact that he will be speaking with Johnson Signs regarding creation of a sign for the Riley property. He said he would get to it this spring. He will report back to the Commission regarding sign options.

Minutes

Discussion was held regarding the handling of corrections in the Minutes:

Morrison **moved** to go with protocol used by other committees in Town of making changes and approving them at the meeting following the date when the minutes were taken, second by Johnson. Sentences with asterisks will no longer be required. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Invasive Plants Removal at the Riley Property

Goodrich said that the money put aside for exotic plants is still available in 2014. Morrison asked about whether the Commission has a contract with someone to do the work. Stepenuck reported last month that it was too late to do the spraying according to Jeff Taylor from Richmond, Vegetation Control Services, Inc. Also a special permit is required according to Taylor. The land needs to be flagged to indicate where the spraying is to be done for the removal of the exotic plants, and a map will be required.

Stepenuck sketched out the Riley property for the Commission indicating the road, parking, the rail trail, and current canoe access point. He also indicated where a second canoe access could be created and where boulders would be placed to keep drivers from driving over grass and vegetation. Finally, he indicated in the sketch the area to flag for spraying. He said Taylor will submit the permit application and also said that Taylor said it is useless to spray in the spring. He recommended that spraying is done in mid-August or later in the summer.

Morrison suggested that someone who is a wetlands scientist might be good to engage to determine what a wetland is. A discussion was held regarding how to determine a wetland. Morrison suggested Tom Forest be asked to take a look at the land. Morrison suggested that Forest be paid for a couple of hours of his time.

Morrison **moved** to ask Tom Forest to walk the Riley property and determine what is a wetland and what is not wetland on the property, and to pay him not more than \$100.00. Smith asked what would be the repercussions if no spraying would be done. Stepenuck explained to Smith that the Commission is trying to control invasive species. Motion was seconded by Coburn. All were in favor except Stepenuck who abstained. **Motion passed.**

REPORTS

- a. **ARLAC** - Stepenuck said he is no longer on the committee. Paul Daniello has been appointed, replacing Stepenuck. However, Stepenuck is to wrap up the 2013 data and do a presentation, Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at the ARLAC meeting at the Keene Public Library. Stepenuck suggested that he could present a version of the ARLAC presentation for the Town of Swanzey and invite anyone interested like the Board of Selectmen, the Open Space Committee, and members of the public, etc. Morrison asked Stepenuck if he would consider doing the presentation for the Southwest Region Planning Commission. Morrison suggested that the information is invaluable and should be shared. Johnson suggested that the March 3, 2014 date would be a good date for Stepenuck to do his presentation for Swanzey. A discussion was held regarding the need for a projector for the presentation. Bernard mentioned that the Open Space Committee (OSC) has a screen and projector that the Conservation Commission might be able to borrow and to consult with OSC Chair Jeanne Thieme to determine availability.
- b. **Open Space Committee (OSC)** – Bernard reported that the OSC will be holding a “retreat” in January at The Bridges B&B in West Swanzey for planning for 2014.
- c. **SWRPC-NC** – Morrison reported that the questionnaire results are in, but not ready for consumption yet.

Possible Demise of Fish & Game Department

Coburn mentioned that there is a rumor that 2014 is the last year for the State of New Hampshire Fish & Game Department since there are budgeting problems with keeping it going. A discussion followed regarding how the Department is funded by licensing and noting that the costs of rescue operations for citizens including hikers, canoeists, and others who are not licensed seldom brings any revenue into State coffers even though folks in need of rescue are charged with fees.

Johnson again referred to her copy of the “House Record” from the State of New Hampshire House of Representatives. She reported that a number of bills reference the Fish & Game Department and that the members of the committee should keep an eye on any Bills coming from the House of Representatives pertinent to that Department.

Morrison **moved** to adjourn, seconded by Johnson, all were in favor. **Motion passed.** Adjournment at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary