

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes – June 3, 2013

Note: Minutes are not final until reviewed and approved by the Commission. Review and approval of minutes generally takes place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission.

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Swanzey Conservation Commission was called to order at 4:08 p.m. by Robert Goodrich, Vice Chair. Committee Members Present: Theresa DiLuzio, Gary Coburn, Jane B. Johnson, Richard Dell'Erba, Stephen Stepenuck

Absent: Deb Crowder, Michael Morrison

Minutes of April 1, 2013 and May 6, 2013 - Tabled until next meeting - The Minutes were not being passed along to the commission for review prior to meetings so Bernard volunteered to pass the minutes on to the members for review after Goodrich has approved them.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS - Chair, Vice-chairperson, Others - Tabled until next meeting when all members should be present

OLD BUSINESS

- **Riley Area**

Grace Lilly letter to the Swanzey Board of Selectmen (BOS) was reviewed. Stepenuck said that he responded to Lilly's letter on April 27, 2013. He said that if there is a Conservation area sign that should be sufficient but that a gate is a pain in the neck. DiLuzio suggested that the response to Lilly's letter will come through a report written by the Conservation Commission that is presented to the BOS. DiLuzio said she brought Town Administrator Shane O'Keefe several documents that dealt with the issues in the letter such as a quote for the sign, documentation of the boat landing assessment, action being taken on the evasive plants, and the tree stand issue. Members of the Conservation Commission will visit with the BOS to discuss with them which direction the commission wants to follow on these issues. DiLuzio said that the commission now has enough information to make some decisions as to what actions should be followed, with approval from the BOS.

Signage

DiLuzio reported that she has a quote of \$360.00 for a sign which she received from Francis Faulkner who in turn got the quote from Johnson's Lettering in Swanzey. She said Faulkner offered to install the sign, but the quote does not include the post, which would be wood. Johnson said it would be good to have a sign. DiLuzio said the price is the issue. Coburn said he is okay with \$360.00 for the sign. Dell'Erba said the post should be at least 4 x 4 so that it is sturdy. Stepenuck made a **motion** to accept the quote from Johnson Lettering for \$360.00 for a sign for Riley Conservation Area, Coburn seconded, and all were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Boat landing

Coburn asked if the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) has to be involved in changing the landing. Stepenuck said the second place they recommended to clear another path to the water is not wet so a wetland permit is not required. Stepenuck said putting some boulders on the path to the brook would prevent cars from getting too close to the brook. The property would end up with two canoe/kayak access points. Stepenuck said that the Swanzey Department of Public Works will need to move boulders into place to establish a second launch site. He suggested that what might be needed is a couple of signs to indicate access point A and point B. DiLuzio suggested that Stepenuck speak to Director of Public Works Lee Dunham about the boulders, and if Dunham approves, that will be part of the presentation to the BOS.

Invasive plants

After consulting with Vegetation Control Services a quote was given to the commission for \$200.00 – 300.00 per acre to get rid of the invasive plants. Johnson says that the commission should go ahead with it. It was noted that the BOS needs to accept Steve Roberge's management plan. **Motion** by DiLuzio to hire Jeff Taylor of Vegetation Control Services to control invasive species in the Riley Conservation area, with the stipulation that the Board accepts the management plan of Steve Roberge, second by Coburn and all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Tree Stand

Coburn said not to touch it until the BOS gets involved. This is Town property and anything allowed by the town for recreation activity should be allowed on this property. Dell'Erba asked if the tree stand is in use. No one knew. Stepenuck suggested that because of liability issues, the commission should make a recommendation to the BOS that anyone wanting to put up a tree stand must get permission from the BOS.

A discussion was held about the regulations applying to tree stands. If constructing a permanent tree stand, the person building the stand has to get written permission from the property owner and cannot trim branches or cut the tree to build it. For portable and climbing tree stands (ladder stand) permission is not needed. Johnson said the one in the Riley property is a portable one. Dell'Erba asked what Lilly's concern was and Coburn and Johnson said the issue is liability; there is a fear that someone will get hurt since the area is open to the public. The members determined that they cannot make a decision about the tree stand until confirming the policy of the BOS regarding lawful activities.

Shane O'Keefe joined the meeting briefly to answer any questions the commission might have regarding Lilly's letter. Johnson said the commission only needed an address for Lilly. The response to the letter is that the commission has been working on the issues and plans on meeting with the BOS to discuss them. O'Keefe confirmed that the Conservation Commission representatives will be on the agenda for the BOS on June 11, 2013.

- **Rain Garden**

Stepenuck discussed water diversion at the Cresson Bridge in order to stop erosion that is currently going into the Ashuelot River from the parking lot. The engineer consulted recommended a berm which would create a rain garden to hold back the water. Stepenuck suggested that costs for Department of Public Works to build the berm could be reimbursed by Conservation Commission budget and Johnson recommended consulting with the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Extension Service, Cheshire County Branch, since they might be willing to initiate a retention pond and help build it. Johnson will call the State conservation commission and UNH extension service for help with the project. Stepenuck made a **motion** to plan and construct a rain garden at Cresson Bridge parking area with the stipulation that the BOS will approve, second by Johnson, all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

- **MRHS Scholarships**

A discussion was held about the scholarships being awarded on June 12, 2013 6:30 p.m. at the Monadnock Regional High School Auditorium. Goodrich said he has two checks ready for \$250.00 each which will be passed to Lorna Watkins-Barth, Guidance Director at Monadnock Regional Middle High School. Goodrich asked for a volunteer to present the awards and give a summary of the commission's work and Johnson volunteered to do so. The commission then decided that the High School Principal should provide the award instead of a commission member.

A brief discussion was held regarding criteria for selecting scholarship winners and campers sponsored by the commission.

- **Reports**

- ARLAC – Stepenuck reported that there was no meeting in May. He said that monitoring is on-going and he went to the training for that. Stepenuck **moved** to allocate \$200.00 for lab costs for continuing monitoring the South Branch of the Ashuelot River for ecoli and phosphorous testing, second by DiLuzio, all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Stepenuck said he is monitoring further and further upstream, and it is polluted all the way through the river. He said that his best guess is that resident geese may be a cause. He said that he has been out as far as Old Richmond Road for testing.

- Open Space Committee (OSC) Report
Bike Ride/Walk will occur June 30th, 2013. Logging/forest management education is a project that the OSC is working on. Bernard has been in touch with Bay State Forestry and the logging will not commence now until winter.
- SWRDC-NR – Morrison was absent - no report

OTHER BUSINESS

Honey Hill Clearing

DiLuzio raised the issue of Honey Hill and the top has been cleared by David Roy so that you can see Mt. Monadnock. DiLuzio reported that David Roy hasn't submitted a bill yet for the clearing for the top of Honey Hill.

Mail Received

Swanzy Lake Road.(Culvert) - The Conservation Commission has received notification of the State putting in a culvert 1250 feet west of Pebble Hill Road.

DES Letter regarding Mike Pratt

Goodrich reported that a letter was received regarding requirements that Pratt must follow to get permits for a pond built without permits.

Coburn **moved** to adjourn, seconded by Stepenuck, all were in favor. **Motion passed** and adjournment at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary