

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes – August 4, 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 4:07 p.m.

PRESENT: Gary Coburn, Bob Goodrich, Jane B. Johnson, Mike Morrison, Wally Smith. Steve Stepenuck arrived ca. 4:14. Johnson, acting as secretary in the absence of the formal one, had to leave ca. 4:40. Stepenuck succeeded her as secretary *pro tem*.

ABSENT: Richard Dell'Erba

Others present:

Bob Osterhout, manager, Swanzey Recycling Center;
Wally Weeks, Society for Protection of NH Forests' caretaker for Dickenson Forest;
Wayne Young, forester and author of management plan for Mt. Cresson Conservation area.

1. Wayne Young shared with the Commission copies of maps of the Mt. Cresson area that he had created in connection with his preparation of a management plan for the area. He discussed the selective logging that had occurred under his direction on one section of the property approximately thirty years ago. Also discussed were various insect threats that still exist in this area.

He recommends some highly selective cutting to allow light in to encourage new plant growth. He also wants to do an educational site walk with the Commission at some mutually convenient date. A tentative date of Saturday October 18 was suggested, but not set.

2. Bob Osterhout: Mr. Osterhout presented the proposed illegal dumping ordinance that he had drafted as a result of meeting with Wally Smith, representing the Commission, and subsequent research of other similar ordinances. Before that, he distributed copies of RSA 163-B:3, and 163-B:4, NH litter laws that have been in effect since about 1972. These appeared to Commission members—contrary to earlier advice that we had received--that unauthorized dumping anywhere in NH is clearly illegal. However, several members felt that a town ordinance should be clearer, and hopefully help to make enforcement easier for police.

It was **voted unanimously to thank Mr. Osterhout for his efforts, and to pass on the proposed ordinance for comments and suggestions by department heads, et al., thence ultimately to the Board of Selectmen for consideration at the town voting day in March.**

3. Wally Weeks: reported that there are two old wells on the "town forest" land near Honey Hill, and that it is possible that one of those has water rights to an abutter. Some town representative should ensure that those old wells do not endanger the public. Property maps were consulted by several members, with the consensus seeming to be that Map 32 L32 was likely the property, and that the help of the Swanzey DPW be solicited to be sure

that the wells are safely covered. He also reported that the trail from Dickenson Forest to the Muster Property had been relocated away from the river bank. This was not surprising, due to the extreme danger to the public from the trail along the slumping river bank. Someone had also erected and then moved a post with a box of trail maps for the Forest.

4. Jane Johnson reported her concern about **water supply in Swanzey** in general. Several members agreed, with some noting that Swanzey is currently possessed of a precious resource—its clean water—but that that resource really needs all the protection we can give it, for everyone’s sake.

5. Minutes of June and July’s meetings were approved by a vote of 4-0-1-2, with Stepenuck abstaining, and Dell ‘Erba and Johnson absent.

6. Old business:

- a. In answer to an inquiry, we sent Kyle Allison to Conservation Camp.
- b. The Riley Conservation Area “Keep Out” and “Authorized vehicles only” signs were erected by DPW director Lee Dunham, not an unauthorized person as previously thought.
- c. Five members: Coburn, Dell ‘Erba, Johnson, Smith, and Stepenuck, went to the Riley area to erect the new sign and clear the trail to the canoe/kayak launch. After some consultation with town hall re who owned what land in the area, the sign was set in concrete close to the gate, to preclude any encroachment concerns. The trail was also cleared.
- d. Stepenuck reported that he had perambulated, marking his track with a GPS, the section of the Riley area that is to be treated for invasives. He also placed several orange flags to show the beginning of that loop, and a few to define waypoints along the way through the thick brush section. He sent those tracks to Jeff Taylor of Vegetation Control, Inc., also with a Google Earth map, because the GPS map did not show the new access road built for the earth excavation. Taylor had acknowledged receipt. That should have been all he needed to proceed with any special permitting necessary.
- e. Letter from DES re Hoden wetlands permit application re dock and retaining wall work at Swanzey Lake: The letter said that several items of information were missing, and if not supplied by a date certain, the permit application would be denied. We are unaware of any other correspondence on this matter.

7. New business

a. Adapter cable: Stepenuck reported that he had bought an adapter cable to connect the OSC’s digital projector to newer-generation laptops, and suggested that the Commission donate that to the OSC, so that anyone else doing a presentation with that projector would have the appropriate adapter cable. He also requested reimbursement for that purchase.

Voted unanimously [4-0-0-2] to donate the adapter cable to accommodate the OSC projector to newer laptop computers to the OSC, and reimburse Steve Stepenuck not more than \$60 for that purchase.

b. Planks for covering the well on the Mt. Cresson Conservation Area: Stepenuck reported that he had purchased 2x12 planks to cover the well at the wellhouse. Planks were used in order to make it less likely that a young child could move them. In case any party in the future might want to use that well, pressure-treated lumber was not used. Discussion followed relative to preserving that wood without endangering the quality of the water. It was decided to seal the planks with a polyurethane varnish, which would be inert

once cured. Stepenuck also requested reimbursement for that purchase, which cost \$98.56.

Voted unanimously to reimburse Steve Stepenuck \$98.56 for purchase of 2x12 planks to cover the concrete well at the Mt. Cresson Conservation Area.

7. New business, cont.

c. River Cleanup: Stepenuck reported that Barbara Skuly, chair of the Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee [ARLAC] had asked if the SCC would support the Connecticut River Watershed Council's [CRWC's] annual river cleanup, scheduled for Oct. 4. Several members had conflicts with that date, and with others that were proposed as alternatives. No commitment to a definite date this fall could be obtained. Finally it was voted unanimously that the SCC was in favor of a river cleanup, and supported the CRWC annual cleanup.

8. Reports:

a. ARLAC: No representative; no report, except the request about the river cleanup, above.

b. OSC: No representative; no report.

c. SWRPC/NRC: Morrison reported that the Committee has not met in the interim.

Adjournment occurred by consensus at approximately 6 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen J. Stepenuck, secretary *pro tempore*.