

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes – September 9, 2013

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. Committee Members Present: Jane B. Johnson, Richard Dell'Erba, Stephen Stepenuck, and Michael Morrison.

ABSENT

Deb Crowder, Gary Coburn

MINUTES

- August 5, 2013 – **Motion** by Morrison to accept the minutes, second by Johnson, and all were in favor except for Stepenuck, who abstained. ***Motion passed.***

OTHERS PRESENT

Shane O'Keefe joined the meeting at 4:12 p.m. and left the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Timber Harvest on Mt. Caesar

Goodrich mentioned that he received a notice that the Timber Harvest has begun on Mt. Caesar. Goodrich also said that he went up to look at the site. Stepenuck asked about erosion control on the site and wondered if the contract included fixing the problems associated with drainage. Stepenuck asked O'Keefe about this issue and O'Keefe reported that Public Works Director Lee Dunham is aware of the need to maintain the road to support continued use. O'Keefe provided a map of the area being harvested and reported that they are taking approximately 14,000 board feet of trees. Idea is to hit each side of the road every ten years. O'Keefe read portions of the contract to the committee. The commission agreed that their issues appeared to be covered by the contract. Stepenuck mentioned the problem with loggers fulfilling their obligations on the contract. O'Keefe pointed out that Baystate Forestry will be monitoring the work being done by the loggers.

Invasive report

Goodrich asked the committee about proceeding with control of invasive species at the Riley property. Stepenuck reported on a discussion he had over the phone with Kirsten Pulkinen, wetlands specialist with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES). He reported that Pulkinen said that if there is no dredging or filling going to happen, then a wetlands permit is not required. Stepenuck mentioned that the unauthorized cutting of the field had added to the problem of invasive species. He reported that Pulkinen said that if there is a licensed contractor going to do the application of treatment to the evasive species, he can apply treatment within 25 feet of surface water.

Canoe access

Stepenuck also reported that he had a conversation with Pulkinnen about the canoe access on the Riley property. He reported that Pulkinnen said a permanent path can be created up to six feet wide by just cutting the trees and brush without a need for any permits. An alternative access point is also being considered and can be designated by putting up a sign. No further permits are required.

Rain Garden project

Pulkinnen also advised Stepenuck about a possible rain garden on Sawyer's Crossing Road near the Cresson Bridge. Stepenuck said that Pulkinnen advised him that a Permit by Notification (PBN) might be sufficient for building steps but a wetlands permit is required if the bank of the river is disturbed. He reported that Pulkinnen said there is a need for plans for the steps, but full engineering specs are not required.

Canoe access at Cresson Bridge

A brief discussion was held regarding canoe access at Cresson Bridge. Johnson suggested that the Cresson Bridge can provide safer access than other places on the river.

Base Hill Road

A discussion was held regarding a firm encroaching onto wetlands. A complaint needs to be filled out so that the DES can take a look at it.

Johnson **moved** to file a complaint with the DES against a paving company property on Base Hill Rd. which has been encroaching on wetlands, seconded by Goodrich. No further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

NEW BUSINESS

West Swanzey land requested by Monadnock Conservancy

A discussion was held regarding a possible donation in response to a request from the Monadnock Conservancy for a conservation easement on land to join Pisgah State Park to the city of Keene. Johnson said that she didn't think any of the money should be coming from the Conservation Fund since it is difficult to rebuild that fund. A discussion was held about the land in question, examining images that were used during the joint meeting presentation.

Open Space Committee (OSC)

Bernard noted that the OSC is sponsoring a "Walk & Talk" event on October 19, 2013 whereby Foresters Steve Roberge and Jeff Snitkin will be discussing the timber harvest on Mt. Caesar. Townsfolks will be invited to participate.

At this point (5:05 p.m.) the Conservation Committee moved their meeting to another conference room at Town Hall and Jane Johnson took over taking minutes for the Conservation Commission meeting since Bernard remained to take minutes for the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) meeting.

Discussion continued on West Swanzey land/Monadnock Conservancy project

Johnson **moved** that the Swanzey Conservation Commission contribute a maximum of 20% of \$22,500 (\$4500). Morrison seconded the motion. The following discussion ensued: Stepenuck asked why only 20%. Johnson reasoned that while the commission wholeheartedly supports the project, we must consider that the source of the commission's funding is the Land Use Change Tax. That tax has seen some decrease in recent years due to the economy. There are projects in the near future that are local in nature and will pose some cost to this committee, Johnson said. Morrison added that we should be prepared to respond to immediate concerns if they should arise. After the discussion, there was agreement that the request from the Monadnock Conservancy was more appropriate to be addressed from Land Acquisition funds. Chairman Goodrich called for the vote. Results were: 5 yea, 0 nay, two absent. The **motion passed**.

Gary Coburn joined the meeting at 5:15 p.m.

Reports:

ARLAC

This report had been posted online and read by members present. Stepenuck addressed the Troy Waste Water Treatment plant as a possible source of the E.Coli count in the South Branch River water tests. Morrison made a **motion** that the Swanzey Conservation Commission communicate this concern to the Town of Troy. Johnson seconded the motion. Chair Goodrich called a vote. Results were 6 year, 0 nay, 1 absent. **Motion passed** and Stepenuck will communicate with the Town of Troy.

SWRDC-NR (Southwest Region Natural Resources Committee)

Morrison distributed the SWRPC Natural Resources survey to members present. Members will complete and return the forms to the Town Hall. Morrison also reported that the scholarship recipients were pleased with their time at Camp Barry and he shared the "thank you" notes they had created and mailed to him.

OTHER BUSINESS

Stepenuck shared information regarding reported shoreline damage at the bridge construction site on Route 10 near Westport. He posed the question of this being an appropriate project for us of ARMS funds in Swanzey. The estimated need is \$119,000. Through discussion the commission members agreed that we should explore an application for ARMS funds as there are various needs that may be fitting.

The commission members expressed a desire for a meeting with the selectmen to work on communication and rules, mission statement and a general "refreshing session" for the commission and the Board of Selectmen. Johnson **moved** that the commission apply for this meeting as is required. Dell'Erba seconded the motion. Chair Goodrich called the vote: Results were 6 year, 0 nay, and 2 absent. The **motion passed**, and the form was completed immediately and handed to the Town Administrator.

Johnson **moved** to adjourn, seconded by Morrison, all were in favor. **Motion passed**.

Adjournment at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary

And Jane B. Johnson, Acting Secretary