

Fitzwilliam Conservation Commission

18 April 2016– Minutes

Present:

Members: Paul Kotila, chair; Barbara Green, Dorothy Zug, Hiel Lindquist, Cheryl Norskey, Rick Brackett

Absent: None

Guests: Terry Silverman (7:35)

Review Minutes of 21 March 2016:

Approved as amended.

Agenda Review:

Meeting with Lions Club: Selectman Holman has given them Sable's phone number and she will schedule this after hearing from them.

Wetlands Survey Update -- Rick:

Brackett coordinated members' comments, met with S. Silverman and Blais, and came up with a list of 47 (top ranking wetland areas), but Van de Poll said this was too many. There had been a miscommunication, in that the Cons Com thought that members were to assess 30-50 of the wetlands listed. Van de Poll said it was more like 15-30. The result was a list of 28 wetlands. It includes two for the proposed pipeline route, both sides of the cranberry bog, etc. They were on the fence about including the Rindge part, but Brackett was not sure how that came out.

Asked how Horseshoe Pond fits in, Brackett said probably just as a wetland.

Brackett had also been talking with Brett about vernal pools. He got 49 from Debbie and picked 14 to present maps at a Rindge training. Van de Poll is starting at the top of the list and working down.

Lindquist asked what's involved with putting together a mitigation project, such as the bridge at Templeton Turnpike. Brackett replied there were no answers about direct mitigation.

Asked how much up front work would be needed, Brackett said the landowners' permissions plus cost estimates, though no stamped engineering studies, etc., would be required.

There was a discussion about what opportunities can be rolled into the plan, such as Van de Poll's comments on the proposed pipeline project and potential mitigation projects.

Metzger TF Stewardship Plan Changes – Paul:

Kotila sent out our response, and Mike Powers sent back an updated version.

Zug suggested a fourth access from the old woods road, described as the Class VI portion of Turner Road, be put into the plan under "access".

She also submitted a letter to Selectmen asking that Gene Cuomo order and install signs saying “hiking trail” on both ends of Turner Rd. Kotila signed the letter to give to Selectmen. He will include Zug’s comments on the plan and send them to Powers.

Kotila suggested using directional names such as south or east instead of left or right. Powers will be asked to insert the changes and return the completed document.

Gas Pipeline Update:

KM/TGP are proposing withdrawing water from Converse Meadow (Rindge) to pressure test pipes, and return water to wetlands. They have also mentioned creating a “burr” at Scott Pond, as it is too shallow to drill under.

Terry Silverman said that he, Susan Silverman and Stephanie Scherr went to a meeting in Keene with a group that convinced the City Council to pay attention to the pipeline issue, but the Keene mayor “got in the way” of the Council’s objecting.

Lindquist said the PUC wants to OK longterm commitments to buying gas. We would end up paying for it through a tariff on our electric bills. The cost of distribution already accounts for over half of our bills.

T. Silverman later added that the Keene City Council will vote on the pipeline issue on the 27th, as the group had made the case that’s it’s a regional problem. The coalition and town are both working to rewrite the rules about regulated utilities. Also, regarding HB 1448 relative to Eminent Domain, they spoke to Sen. Andy Sanborn. That bill would require that for 15 acres or less, they would have to take the whole parcel. It also addresses mitigation, which the pipeline company would like to see applied only to where the 30-inch pipeline is.

Also being considered is HB 1660—about not having ratepayers pay for the project.

In Oregon, a 197-mile was denied because it was totally for export, as there were no contracts. KM/TGP’s plan to contract locally with Liberty Utilities is like “selling gas to themselves”, said Silverman.

The Coalition will meet with Annie Kuster and prospective gubernatorial candidates in Brookline, NH a week from Thursday, at 9 a.m., according to Silverman.

Dog Waste Cleanup Bags:

Zug talked to one neighbor who walks four dogs along the Rockwood Pond trail. The Society for the Protection of Rockwood Pond doesn’t meet until summer. Zug will ask them if it’s OK to let dog owners put dog waste bags in the Society’s existing trash bin. If the plan works, we can put a waste bag station at Templeton Turnpike.

Open Space Committee Updates -- Dorothy:

Zug reported that they will reply to the last three responses to the letters sent out. Also, they prepared a sheet to go in the newsletter about conservation options. After that, they will “put the committee down for a while”. Kotila will convert the three letters into PDF’s.

Also, Jean Ibel used to check the committee’s emails. Zug will forward any that have come in. It may take a big impact to move folks toward easements.

Kotila attended a wildlife action plan session and said there are resources out there now for assistance to towns. It might be good to see how the NRI can be updated. This year, we could tackle the wildlife action plan & wetlands.

Also, the Natural Resources Conservation Service has reclassified some soils to include locally important agricultural soils.

Monadnock Advisory Committee Update:

Lindquist saw the draft of a pipeline letter they are doing, to be sent to DRED and a few others. It is basically the letter that our Cons Com did, adapted to Rhododendron State Park. T. Silverman had shown them photos of the pipeline route through Rhododendron.

Site Walk Reports:

None.

Budget Reports:

Payroll: \$373.89 YTD.

Planning Board:

T. Silverman --Eversource extension – The company has agreed to install sound barriers, which should keep noise levels down to about 3 DB over ambient noise level. They have also agreed to provide plantings along old rte. 12 and all around the substation, so that it can't be seen from Rte. 12.

Also, this week the Board will be hearing a proposal by Blue Sky Telecommunications for a local communications facility at the Pinnacle. It would be for Wi-Valley and local communications. The plan was originally for Webber Lane. This would be 120 feet high, but no more visible than what's there now. It would serve the whole lower quadrant of town.

Other Business:

Zug – request about re-appointments. Kotila sent it in to Selectmen. No answer yet.

Green brought up a workshop given in Rindge by DES, concerning water sampling for private wells. She thought it might be a good project for us to do here. Tests were only \$15 per residence for arsenic.

Members discussed how the testing might relate to the proposed pipeline project. The tests would have to cover more and be more expensive. Does the town get your information?

Kotila didn't think the town should get into private testing for personal use. Well owners can go to DES. You have to take the sample there the same day it is drawn.

The project would be good to do when the summer people are here.

Quarries – T. Silverman thinks the judge didn't buy (quarry owner) Olson's recent plea. It appears he is getting five years in prison, plus facing IRS charges. Last year we changed the mining laws, so at least now the town has site plan review before such a plan goes to the State.

Zug requested that the WGTF appear regularly on the Cons Com agenda and Kotila agreed.

There are currently no trails days planned there.

Correspondence:

DES Drinking Water & Ground Water newsletter; UNH Stewardship Network Training Guides announcement; DES – Approved wetlands permit, Paul Grasewicz, West Lake Rd., steps to Laurel Lake.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Next meeting—May 16, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Sable, Secretary