

## **Fitzwilliam Conservation Commission**

20 June 2016– Minutes, approved

### **Present:**

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

**Absent:** Cheryl Norskey

### **Guests:**

Tracy Tarr, GZA; Joseph Sperry, Eversource; Laurel Boivin, Eversource; Kevin Woolley, resident; Anne McBride, Monadnock Conservancy

### **Review Minutes of 16 May 2016:**

Approved as amended.

### **Agenda Review:**

Tracy Tarr – Eversource

### **Chamberlain Property – Anne McBride:**

McBride presented background info on the complicated history of the Chamberlain property since 2012. DES had wanted it closer to adjacent conserved land, with more uplands, so Fitzwilliam wasn't chosen to receive ARM funding for a conservation project there in 2014. There were five competing applications submitted in 2015. The Monadnock Conservancy has now resubmitted a proposal, feeling it is still worth trying for, particularly in light of the Prime Wetlands project and the high ranking given to the Sip Pond area, which is part of the lower CT River watershed.

Because the Chamberlain project has been under consideration for so long, it may be seen as a good quality and competitive project which could proceed with partial funding. Since the property is 75% wetland, we must make our case that 25% is developable and a threat to the wetlands. A bargain sale of \$80,000 plus surveys, etc., would cost about \$127,000. The Conservancy would own the property. Its Lands Committee viewed it in winter but will go out again on Wednesday.

As far as building and maintaining a parking lot, McBride said there could be an easement but there is already a log landing, which could simply be defined. The Cons Com could do that. We could partner with Conservancy and eventually turn it over to the town, pending further discussion.

Lindquist added that the property could offer significant recreational opportunities. We could perhaps get additional matching funds. He suggested discussing if and what we can contribute to this project at our next meeting.

Kotila asked that the Conservancy provide an itemized budget for the costs of the project.

McBride agreed. She will also submit a state moose plate grant proposal, as rail trail and fishing opportunities exist there. She could hear back from ARM and the moose plates division by late November or December, and hope to finish the process by 2017.

Rick Van de Poll has assured the Conservancy that the research he has been doing for the town can be used, regardless of whether Prime wetlands are approved.

The property is assessed at 91 acres but is probably closer to 75, according to McBride, as tax maps are inconclusive. All of the land is on the west side of Old Turnpike Rd. It would not be open to the public until after cleanup days could be held.

Zug added that the Bordens, owners of the former Vicki Fisher property on Fullam Hill Rd., are still interested in an easement donation but can't cover transaction costs.

Brackett requested an estimation of transaction costs. Zug will talk to Borden about the project.

### **Eversource Transmission Line Extension:**

Tarr, a wetlands scientist for GZA, explained that someone from Eversource had met with the Cons Com in 2014 on the Q-166 transmission line, a 2.5 mile extension from the Monadnock substation in Troy to the Fitzwilliam substation. The project went to the Planning Board, where concerns about view sheds and noise were expressed. After numerous meetings, the design has been amended to make a smaller impact on the view by siting the new line next to the existing ROW. The new option reduces clearing by 4 acres, will be farther from Rte. 12, and will decrease impact on upland buffers, Tarr said. Nineteen poles will be added in Fitzwilliam, each with an average height of 17 feet. Tarr presented mitigation planting plans, illustrated in timed simulations.

Asked if there was any plan to lay down something other than gravel around the substation for aesthetics, Tarr replied that grass is purposely omitted for safety reasons. A town-owned portion of old Rte. 12, discontinued by the State in the late 40's or 50's, is to be restored for the project. A list of the wetland plants to be used was presented. The corridor will be monitored and maintained by Eversource. DES is considering it a restoration project with temporary impact. Over \$134,000 is anticipated for the ARM fund for mitigation. Construction will be monitored, and questions addressed. A sound wall will be installed in the substation area by this October, when the plantings will also be done, pending Planning Board approval. The two-sided wall may be 30 feet high. Asked if there would be newsletter outreach, the applicants said the info may be posted on the town website. Members suggested also asking Selectmen to include the information in the newsletter.

Kotila felt the proposal would be a significant improvement over the previous plan. Brackett added we would have no problem if they "don't lose sight of the fact that it's a wetland."

Tarr urged the Cons Com to issue a letter to DES voicing our consensus.

Kotila later agreed to draft such a letter and send it to members. He'll email it to the selectmen and Planning Board, which he noted has done a "wonderful job" on this.

The applicant meets July 5<sup>th</sup> with the Planning Board and would need a letter by then.

### **Wetlands Survey Update--Rick:**

Guest Kevin Woolley introduced himself as a Fitzwilliam resident, saying he was an amateur who became interested in wetlands after following the pipeline issue. He went to numerous vernal pool sites in the KMTF, and five in the WGTF. He filled out information and took photos that were passed to Rick Van de Poll, who trained him. He shared a thumb drive with the info, including his comments and sketches.

Members encouraged Woolley to consider joining the Cons. Com, which is down one alternate member.

Brackett added that Van de Poll has been reaching out to landowners to do field assessments, and explaining what the designation of prime wetlands means for owners. The final count of prime candidates for Prime wetlands designation is something like 30. Van de Poll has mailed owners of properties that he wants to visit. He will then do ground assessments of their scenic and wildlife values, etc., and return with reworked rankings. The work is running behind schedule but still aimed at next Town Meeting.

**Metzger TF Stewardship Plan Changes – Paul:**

Kotila still has not heard back from Mike Powers but the revised plan is in his hands and as yet not paid for.

Zug has talked to Linda Toltan again regarding access to the KMTF from Old Troy Rd. and will keep a conversation going with her.

**Solar Array Proposal:**

Ranger Solar was not present but Brackett reported that the proposed project extends from the Borden property on Fullam Hill Rd., west to Rte. 12. A property on the Corner of #4 Rd. and Rte. 12 is also potentially in play. The plan includes planting pollinator habitat around the arrays. The utility would produce up to 60 megawatts of power, according to Planning Board minutes.

**Dog Waste Cleanup Bags:**

Zug emailed the president of the Society for the Preservation of Rockwood Pond and has received two responses from members of the organization. Zug thinks it would be OK to go forward with the trial run to install a dog waste station at the Rockwood Pond trail. Sable will write an article for the August newsletter and get info from the company for purchase of the simplest station post and supply of bags. Zug will monitor the project.

There was also a discussion of the condition of the rail trail due to a logging project. Lindquist will contact the snowmobile club that maintains the trail about this. A stream has washed out a portion of the trail along the flats, and there is evidence of 4-wheelers using the trail.

**Open Space Committee Updates -- Dorothy:**

A “Conservation Options for Landowners in NH” insert will be in next newsletter. Printing and paper costs were \$191.00. Sable will turn in the receipt, signed by Kotila, to Selectmen for reimbursement to Zug.

Brackett will find out how to check any email responses for the OSC.

A newsletter article about current use is being planned for September.

**Monadnock Advisory Committee Update:**

No news

**Site Walk Reports:**

None

**Budget Reports:**

Not available

**Planning Board:**

Minutes were emailed from the Land Use Office.

**Other Business:**

Hiking trail signs – Zug asked that a memo be sent to Selectmen about this.

Complete Streets workshop will be held in Troy on Friday – Zug will attend.

Zug also would like to have name plaques around the meeting table to identify members.

**Correspondence:**

Fitzwilliam Town Code, supplement No. 17. Who has the book? Kotila will follow up. DES Shoreland Impact Permit, Spicer Point Rd.

DES complaint of possible violation, 25 Rantilla Lane, M38/L 9-- Suspected addition of sand and construction of dock without permit.

**Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. Next meeting—July 18, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanne Sable, Secretary