

Fitzwilliam Conservation Commission
17 Oct. 2016 – Minutes

NOTE: Meeting began at 6:30pm with a slide presentation about the Prime Wetlands study by Rick Van de Poll

Present: Rick Van de Poll,
Robin Blaise, Planning Board;
Cons Com Members: Paul Kotila, Chair; Dorothy Zug; Barbara Green; Kevin Woolley,
alternate; Rick Brackett, Hiel Lindquist, Cheryl Norskey.
Selectmen: Susan Silverman, Chair; Nancy Carney; Chris Holman; Admin. Assistant Debbie Favreau.

Absent: None

Guests: 9 members of the public

S. Silverman introduced Dr. Van de Poll for his final report. Questions were welcomed.

Van de Poll said he'd made it to all but 2 of the final areas selected. The point ranks were done earlier. His hope was to pick up where he last left off. This is a "work in progress." The Town will decide where or if they want designated Prime Wetlands. His considerations were mostly scientific.

The four main components of the project were: I.D. & mapping; Classification; Assessment of Functions & Values; and Conservation & Restoration Recommendations.

Prime Wetlands don't include buffers. His latest estimation is that there are a little over 5,000 acres of wetlands in Fitzwilliam, in 5,125 units.

Wetlands here are critically integrated with lakes, ("lacustrin"), so are included and mapped. Of 114 Wetland Evaluation Units (WEU's) totaled, Sip Pond is the largest. When considering restoration possibilities to include in an application for payment, the most dramatic are likely to qualify, such as Scott Pond looking at Monadnock and & Gap Mountain. Groundwater recharge is of greatest value.

The last step is to submit nominees — the top 16 areas are indicated in yellow on the map. They are well distributed throughout town.

Asked what a Prime Wetlands designation might mean to a landowner, Van de Poll replied it could restrict things like having a dock or boardwalk on a pond, though you could apply for special exception. It is not the same as the wetland protection overlay district, which we already have. It could provide a potential for conservation open space as an offset to a development, or determine whether you will be subject to adjacent development. It would not take any wood away. You could cut in a prime wetland buffer.

Since ponds are already protected, we could draw a line to the high water mark and protect all wetland surrounding ponds, rather than have overlapping protection of ponds.

Asked how prime wetlands might affect “buildability”, Van de Poll replied that the state may look more closely at activity in the buffer and be more likely to give a more protective overview. Preexisting structures, etc. would be grandfathered. He added that there’s still a lot of buildable land in Fitzwilliam.

Asked to address stratified drift aquifers, he said Sip Pond and Royalston Rd. have the biggest. There are also a few smaller ones. They are great future public water supplies. It would be smart to think about this. You can build a public well in Prime Wetland.

The presentation ended at 8:15 p.m., and the regular Conservation Commission meeting began:

Review Minutes of 19 Sept 2016

Approved as amended.

Agenda Review:

Zug asked to talk about having trails, such as the Widow Gage and Rhododendron Park trails, posted on the internet. Sandra had given her paperwork on how to do this. Zug passed the instructions to Woolley who will work on them and return the papers to Zug.

Dog Waste Cleanup Bags:

The Commission received a letter from DRED on this from Trails Bureau Chief Chris Gamache. He OK’d installation of the cleanup station according to our outline of the project in Kotila’s recent letter. Kotila will inform selectmen that we wish to proceed with our original plan to install the station on the rail trail off Collins Pond Road. Lindquist has the components.

Chamberlain Property—Update:

Kotila reported that Anne McBride (Monadnock Conservancy) has obtained \$10,000 from the Q2C (Quabbin to Cardigan) fund for this project.

Metzger TF Stewardship Plan Changes:

Still in progress.

Widow Gage Town Forest:

Kotila reported that Mr. Wenniger has died, and Mrs. Wenniger is selling their property and house abutting the WGTF. She spoke with to Anne, who hopes to work out a way to get the property into conservation. Kotila felt it would be a wonderful property to have as it would protect the beaver pond, etc. It is comprised of two sections, 25 + 15 acres.

Our conservation fund balance is \$77,000. Capital reserves are approximately \$24,500.

Solar Array Proposal:

No news.

Monadnock Advisory Committee Update:

Nothing.

Site Walk Reports:

None

Budget Reports:

Green emailed the new draft budget and CIP proposal to members. The CIP Committee will be reviewing the CIP request on Thursday, Nov. 10th. The meeting starts at 6:15 pm and includes three other departments.

The Budget Committee will be reviewing the Con Com budget on Thursday, Dec. 1st at 7:10 pm. Mileage claims and other expenses should be submitted before our hearing. Consulting could include Prime Wetlands work. \$500 for consulting is budgeted. We can decide this before the end of December .

Planning Board:

No news

Other Business:

Complete Streets program — Zug spoke with Suzanne and explored this. It would require a survey. Zug was no longer interested as it would be too complicated.

Correspondence:

NHDES Drinking Water Fall newsletter; DES Complete Forestry Notification, M14, L 37 — Jason Drew/Sara Olson; Memo, Debbie Favreau—CIP schedule; NHACC, Annual Meeting and Conference, Nov. 12.; NHACC Annual Dues invoice for 2017; DES, Request for More Info, Dredge & Fill application, David P. Lapointe, M38, L 9 — 25 Rantilla Lane; Reply from DRED re dog waste station request.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m. Next meeting—Nov. 21, 2016, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Sable, Secretary