

**Town of Fitzwilliam
Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2018**

Members Present: Paul Kotila, Chairman; Rick Brackett; Barbara Green; Hiel Lindquist; Cheryl Norskey; Kevin Woolley; and Dorothy Zug.

Members Absent: Rick Brackett, Vice Chairman

Others Present: Matt Buonomano and Laurie Hayward, Land Use Assistant (LUA).

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:12 pm.

Review Minutes: The Chair took up the minutes of 20 August 2018. A number of changes were suggested. *[The LUA was asked to add an "s" to letter 3rd paragraph of Trail updates. Next paragraph, delete first sentence. Change the second sentence to "Brackett indicates the Commission needs to know what they are applying for in the way of Quabbin to Cardigan Funding grants". Next paragraph, change Gene Como "has been" to "will be" and delete/change to say Turner Road off Rhododendron is a Class VI Road. Regarding LUA to write a letter to Select Board, add "requesting a sign stating this is a Class VI Road." Next paragraph, first sentence after red trail, add "in the Window Gage Forest." Last sentence in Trail Updates, correct Lew's last name to Shelley. Under Dog Waste, correct "Hiel says he still has bags" to read "Hiel says he has sufficient bags". Under initiatives, add "fishing tackle" after Lead and add "to support the program" after donation and the name is corrected to "wings of dawn". Change Gene Como "designed and installed the box" to "installed the box." Under Arsenic in Drinking Water, first sentence second paragraph, add "water" after Laurel Lake. Fourth sentence change "DPW" to "DES". Next sentence, add "a" before sampling and correct "chloroform" to "coliform". Change the sentence beginning Green asked about property to read "Green stated there is confusion about the process for handling building applications on lakes and ponds".]* **Lindquist moved and Zug seconded and it was voted to approve as amended.**

Consultation: Matt Buonomano- Buonomano displayed a map of the town that included areas identified as conservation property. He pointed out his property. He showed a poster/sign printed in 1953 for an active Ski area in Fitzwilliam. He gave a bit of the history including past ownership. Buonomano also showed a map of one-time ski trails that were for a time maintained by the owners of the Fitzwilliam Inn. That stopped in 2007. He said that since the big ice storm, the trails have not been maintained and are now not really usable. Buonomano showed that some maps have been published which do not accurately show access, including not showing the old Class VI road. (Old Ashuelet Turnpike.) Lindquist asked who holds the easement. Buonomano stated that Monadnock Conservancy holds the easement. The town did not have deeded rights to the trails; but, the Fitzwilliam Inn had rights that expired in 2016. The Chair recommended getting together with the Conservancy to walk the boundary in order to make sure it is clear where they are.

Lindquist asked who maintains the trails now. Buonomano explained that he spoke with the town and they sent John Holman three years ago and he did clean up some trails, mostly the yellow and red trails. Since then there has been a deterioration of conditions.

Buonomano says the easement with Monadnock Conservancy allows some things that people might not expect. It includes agricultural activities and the option to build structures. The Conservancy can also exclude use by townspeople. If the easement permits posting of the property, it's the owner, not the Conservancy, who would do the posting. There is an 8-acre piece that could be taken out and used to develop 6 cabins for any non-profit use. Zug asked what Buonomano would like to see happen. Buonomano says that he would like to see the town own it and restore the trails. If he sells it he does not want someone to close the property to town use and develop it. The Chair asked if Buonomano has checked the soils. The Chair said he doesn't think the property in question is good agricultural property. Buonomano said maybe pasture and some plants like blueberries; but, not much else.

The Chair noted that the Conservation Commission has never been involved in those trails. The Fitzwilliam Recreation Department has been. The Chair did note that because the property is essentially in the middle of town it might be a wonderful asset for the town. It was pointed out that making it Town Forest rather than something like the Conservancy owning it, would give the Fitzwilliam Conservation Commission more say in the use of the land. Lindquist mentioned that perhaps they could do trail agreements which commonly run for ten years. Buonomano offered to have anyone who is interested take a site walk on the property. There was a short discussion about the likely location of an old snow making works.

The Chair stated that he appreciated the information Buonomano provided. The Board thanked Buonomano.

Trail Updates: The Chair says he and Rick Brackett got together with Lew Shelley. The Chair directed the LUA to place Lew on the October Agenda to speak about trails.

Widow Gage Trails - Lindquist says blue trail in good shape. He says the red trail along the road is really "bushed in". He asked why the trail wasn't designed to just follow the road. The Chair indicated that he thinks it was because the road is not as interesting as the trail. The Chair agreed that the red trail is not used nearly as much as the blue. Zug said members should be commended for the great care and condition of the blue trail.

Property Updates: The Chair indicated that he didn't have anything specific and as Rick Brackett was not there, it could be addressed next meeting.

Solar Array Proposal: The Chair addressed the LUA. Asking if she had heard anything about solar proposals. The LUA stated that she had been contacted by Next Era and they had set an appointment for later in October. The project is called "Chinook." There was a very brief discussion about companies shopping various nearby towns including Rindge, New Hampshire and Royalston, Massachusetts.

Monadnock Advisory Commission Update: Meeting Thursday. Lindquist says there is nothing specific to Fitzwilliam that they are working on at this point.

Site Walk Reports: None

Dog Waste: Hiel says he still has sufficient bags.

Budget Reports: Nothing to report. The Chair asked the LUA to check into why they are not getting monthly budget reports.

Initiatives:

Trail Maps: There was a discussion about reprinting trail maps, which maps and cost and timing. It was agreed that Green would work on determining how many of which maps to have reprinted and in what quantities. Green says she will contact Connie Porter regarding getting more maps. There was a discussion about possible changes and whether to print more of map 1 and whatever map is the rail trail.

Zug went back to the conversation about the Buonomano land, she thinks the Board should consider follow up on the idea of making the property Town Forest. The Chair asked for a sample of similar agreements.

Arsenic in Drinking water survey project Chair asked if there was anything new on arsenic and drinking water. Green says that she brought up the subject at the Laurel Lake Board Meeting to see what the interest was and found that there is much interest. Work should be done in summer months. Green contacted Dartmouth Toxic Metals Super Fund Research Program with questions and they have replied. Green read a letter from that organization which offered 2 options: 1. Testing with town training and handing out testing kits which cover general water testing, and 2. Dartmouth does events but does not hand out test kits. Green also found information on the DES website. Green suggested that they take this up again in the spring.

Other Business: Members took up a discussion about the Zoning and Planning Board process and their concern that they weren't being invited to meetings that involve properties that they should know about. An example that the LUA had researched was mentioned in connection to concerns regarding process and the LUA described the process that the ZBA used and is required to use. Additionally, the LUA explained that she was working with the Planning and Zoning Boards to ensure that Notices regarding hearings go out to all conservation easement holders. She was informed that most of the conservation lands and easements in Fitzwilliam are not controlled by the Conservation Commission or the town. Easements are mostly held by the Monadnock Conservancy. The LUA stated that she had begun providing notices to all Land Use Boards and Commissions in an effort to ensure that the Conservation Commission Members do know about Public Hearings even if they were not specifically on the Abutters Lists for Notices. There was a question about a Site Walk. In the instance in question, Greene was an abutter, so she knew about it. Her concern is that the Conservation Commission is not being invited and they should be. The LUA did say that members of the Conservation Commission always have a right to come to any public hearing, including site walks. Board Members asked the LUA to check the statutes regarding their rights and responsibilities to be

involved in cases before Planning and Zoning. Their concern is for their requirement that they act on anything that involves the Wetlands Protection Overlay District. The Chair summed it up as a question regarding how they become part of the process that has been set out by the state of New Hampshire in which the Conservation Commission takes an active part in the process to approve or not approve of actions to be taken, like demolition and rebuilding of structures in sensitive and protected areas; especially, as concerns wetlands, ponds, lakes.

Adjournment: There being no additional business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 9:22PM. The next Conservation Commission Meeting will be held at 7:00 PM, October 15, 2018

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurie Hayward
Land Use Administrative Assistant

DRAFT