

**Town of Fitzwilliam
Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 13, 2019**

Members Present: John Fitzwilliam, Chairman; Bill Davis, Marcia Camden, and Claire Borowski, Members, and Robyn Bates, Selectmen's Representative.

Others Present: Todd Snowling, Applicant; Beth Vanney; Karen Viens, and Laurie Hayward, Land Use Administrative Assistant (LUA).

Call To Order The Chairman opened meeting at 4:00.

HDC Permit for Todd Snowling regarding installing a fence at 39 Templeton Turnpike, which is in the Historic District, Tax Map 15, Lot 60.1.

Todd Snowling spoke about his plan to install fencing, including that he & his wife are expecting a child and may wish to have a fenced play yard. Davis offered that it should not be a chain-link fence. Snowling pointed out his drawings and that they propose installing a picket fence. Davis and Borowski agreed that a simple picket fence is appropriate.

Snowling asked if there was a date by which the fence would be required to be painted. The Members agreed that it is a good idea to let a wood fence season and it should be painted within a year. There was additional discussion about an alternative of cedar posts and rough-cut pine and that those would not require the time to "season". **Fitzwilliam called for a motion to approve a picket fence. Borowski moved and Davis seconded the motion to approve a picket fence for Todd Snowling and the Commission Members voted unanimously in favor.**

Todd Snowling and Claire Borowski left at this point.

Discussion on the electrical enclosure on the town common. There was a brief discussion about the "guardhouse" enclosure for the electrical panel on the common. Davis was concerned that it be finished including painted. Fitzwilliam suggested staining as opposed to paint which requires more maintenance. It was agreed either gray or white would be the best option. Fitzwilliam suggested that a soft gray color would be the least intrusive.

Minutes from the meetings: Minutes from September 13, 2018, correct spelling of Girolamo in last sentence and correct "sight" to "site". Fitzwilliam called for motion, **Davis moved that the Minutes of September 13, 2018 be approved as amended; Camden seconded and the motion was approved unanimously. Minutes from December 13, 2018,** Members took up corrections with a single name correction to Nick Noyes not Noyce. **Fitzwilliam moved and Davis seconded that the Minutes of September 13, 2018 be approved as amended and the motion was approved unanimously. Minutes from February 21, 2019,** Members made a

change from “The Chair indicated that simply going with clapboards.” to “The Chair recommended simply going with clapboards.” **Fitzwilliam moved and Davis seconded that the Minutes of February 21, 2019 be approved as amended and the motion was approved unanimously. Minutes from May 30, 2019,** Fitzwilliam corrected the spelling of brouhaha and remove the “s” off commons and “s” off Antiques Show. Fitzwilliam called for motion, **Camden moved that the Minutes of May 30, 2019 be approved as amended; Davis seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.**

Old Business: In the course of approving the minutes, Davis asked the current status of the Farris work on the “Old Post Office”. The LUA explained that she has tried to contact Mr. Farris and has spoken to him. Each time she has been told that he does work around the country and is not available for a meeting in New Hampshire. Farris did once promise to send a package with information; but, no such package has been received. The Commission did give him permission to demolish; but, he needs to get approval to complete construction. The LUA added that Farris can’t do anything to complete the project without a Construction Permit and that requires Historic District Commission approval. **The LUA asked if the Commission wishes to have her ask the Selectmen to send Farris a letter. Davis suggested advising that he has not completed the paperwork or process for both Historic District Commission approval and Board of Selectmen approval of a Construction Permit and to cease and desist any and all work on the site. Davis moved such a letter be requested and Fitzwilliam seconded the motion and it was voted unanimously.**

Consultation: Beth Vanney regarding invasive plants. Beth Vanney spoke. She explained that she and her husband moved here two years ago. She knew about the problems with oriental bittersweet before she came to Fitzwilliam. When she found it here in Fitzwilliam, she decided to take it on before it became a bigger problem. She talked about her initiative and efforts to remove that invasive plant from properties here in Fitzwilliam. She spoke about the way this predatory plant destroys trees and can decimate the landscape of a town.

What to do if you find bittersweet on your property. Vanney gave members a hand-out. Members expressed appreciation for the quality of the handout. Vanney stated that she feels the town is at a tipping point and it is important to correct the problem now. She explained that she has travelled the Historic District surveying properties and finding which ones have oriental bittersweet on them. Vanney described some of the areas that seem to have the worse infestations of bittersweet. Vanney suggested the best approach to removal is to cut the bittersweet and then brush an herbicide on the stems. The cuttings should be bagged and taken to the landfill. Cuttings should not be placed in a compost pile but instead placed in a “burn pile”. Fitzwilliam told Vanney that she inspired him to dig out the bittersweet on his property. He asked Vanney about her recommendations for herbicides. She recommended Triclopyr for treatment of bittersweet and for painting on stems use Brush Kill 2, a Bayer product. Vanney also told members that this is the time of the year to attack the problem before the berries appear.

What is the biggest hindrance to removal of bittersweet? Vanney explained that she feels the biggest issue is awareness. Apathy may be part of it; but people don't know what a big problem bittersweet is and, if they do, don't know what they can do about it. She explained that she feels a community effort is needed to get this problem under control. Fitzwilliam offered that Davis is good at getting people involved. Davis said that the problem is that the same small group of people volunteer to do so much for the community. Karen Viens offered that, if landowners understood the consequences and knew it directly affects their neighborhood or even their property, they might be more inclined to volunteer. There was a question about whether Vanney had placed an article in the town newsletter. Vanney has done that and the Conservation Commission suggested that she repeat the article. Bates asked if Vanney was planning something at the library. Vanney says that she is planning an information session at the Fitzwilliam Library on June 19th. Vanney asked for any ideas on getting more information out to the community and on getting more volunteers. Fitzwilliam stated that he feels homeowners have a vested interest in this and might get out themselves or hire someone to attack the bittersweet on their property. Viens offered to help with the effort.

Mailing Flyers to Households in the Historic District. There was a suggestion to hand out flyers or maybe include them in the town newsletter. Vanney expressed her concern about the cost. Bates asked if the Historic District Commission has funds to subsidize having the flyer as an insert in the town newsletter. Fitzwilliam stated that he is not sure that the Historic District has money that it can use for this purpose. The LUA stated that there is a small amount of money that they could use from the Land Use Printing budget. The LUA suggested that they could identify the households in the Historic District and limit the mailing to those households. The LUA stated that she would need to know the number of households and the costs so that she could check the budget. Vanney said that the cost to print is \$1 per page, actually both sides. The LUA asked if it could be done by using a single page folding it, adding a stamp, adding labels, and mailing it out. Bates stated that it will be interesting to see what kind of turn-out will be like at the library. Bates also suggested that an additional event at the inn would be helpful. Bates offered to follow-up on that. The LUA asked members if they wanted her to follow-up on the flyer printing. Vanney agreed that she would get the flyer down to one page. **Fitzwilliam made a motion that the LUA make a list of the properties in the Historic District, check the budget and, if there are funds available, prepare labels for the mailing from the list. Davis seconded the motion and it was voted unanimously.** Bates suggested that the mailing list be consulted before mailing against a list of properties that do have bittersweet and, on those that do, a hand-written note be added letting the homeowner know that. It was noted that there are other invasive plants, Japanese knotweed, wild roses, and bishop's weed were mentioned.

Where are some significant infestations? Vanney used a map of the town to point out some of the places where she has seen infestation. There are areas of infestation, large and small throughout town. Vanney mentioned that she didn't on quick examination find anything at Laurel Pond. Bates did suggest that Vanney go to Laurel Lake Association and ask them to put a flyer in their newsletter as well because they do work with invasive plants like milfoil. There

was a discussion about the state offer to do a single public exhibition to show how to work on removing bittersweet. Vanney explained that one of the possible exhibition sites is the Fitzwilliam Transfer Station which is “loaded” with bittersweet and may be a major source of infestation. Vanney stated that she feels there are two lots that are “gateway lots”, the “former stable lot” and the “red house”. These properties are at the entrance to the Fitzwilliam Historic District from routes 12 and 119 and are likely a significant contributor to further infestations.

What can volunteers do to remove bittersweet? Bates asked what if volunteers concentrate on the two “gateway lots” and have the state do the Transfer station. Vanney reminded Bates that the property owner must be present when volunteers are working on removing invasive plants. If weed killer is to be used, then the property owner must apply it or bring in a licensed professional to apply. Vanney agreed that she would ask the state representative to do the exhibit at the transfer station and clear the bittersweet and maybe work on the Japanese knotweed there as well.

There being no further business, Fitzwilliam called for a motion to adjourn, **Camden moved; Davis seconded the meeting be adjourned and it was voted unanimously that the meeting adjourn** at 5:22.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Hayward
Land Use Administrative Assistant