

Strafford Conservation Commission
Minutes
March 2, 2009

Present:

Liz Evans
Harmony Anderson
Cal Schroeder
Carolyn Page
Jack Bronnenberg
Bruce Smith
Dave Perkins

Guests:

Scott A. Young
Bill Vance
Dan Phelan
Kerry Omand
Don Clifford
Damon Burt

Opening and Introductions

The meeting was opened at 7:10 pm. A motion was made by Cal and seconded by Jack to accept the February 2009 **minutes**. Approved.

News of our financial status can be found in the town report. There has been no new money since July of 2007.

Jack is leaving the commission but asked to be kept informed of activities and will be willing to help out wherever needed. We thank you for your years of service. Your input in matters pertaining to forestry and logging has been invaluable.

Cal has agreed to stay on the Commission as an alternate.

Kerry Omand said that he would be interested in one of the empty Commission positions.

Guest Presentations

Damon Burt of Fraggie Rock Environmental Services came before us with two proposals. Both will need site walks to check wetlands in the spring. The first proposal is for a parking lot for the Bow Lake Fire Department building. Discussion involved concerns about the wetland and the availability of other parking alternatives. It was suggested that a member of the department come to talk to us about the proposal.

The second proposal was for the updating of an already existing woods road at a farm in the Crown Point area that has been washed out in the last two floods. Of major concern is a 40 inch steel culvert

through which the Berry (or a tributary) River runs. It has been eroded and need replacement for safety and to ease erosion. This work will involve a wildlife improvement plan. Blandings turtles have been found in the area. The NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) is already working on this project. Jack wants to be sure that an open bottom culvert is being considered by them.

Dan Phelan spoke to us as a member of the Managed Growth Group. He was prompted by some recent subdivision requests to tell us of requirements in the state of Vermont that helped to save prime agricultural soils from development. He explained that the way the roads were laid out in Strafford they go through the good farming soils because that is where people settled. He went on to say that it would be better if subdivision lots could be tucked in around these soils at the backs of sites. This would preserve the prime soils and the current vistas as noted in our master plan. The Vermont law requires that a like amount of land be set aside to offset each subdivision. He will get the website address for us. Liz encouraged him to bring this information to the Planning Board in the form of a proposal about saving prime agricultural lands. It would be helpful for the Planning Board to have some language to work with. They are able to change subdivision regulations.

DES application none

Old Business

March 16th walk date on new easement property: We will meet at the donator's home unless Harmony emails us otherwise.

Warrant Articles: The selectmen had taken the \$750.00 budget for the Commission out of the Town budget. During the hearing, Liz made it known what that money is used for and that we needed it to continue with our work. They reinstated \$225.00 for our dues to regional groups. All other needed money will have to come out of our rollover account until that is depleted.

Liz and hopefully Phil Auger will speak about SB381 (discussed last month). Harmony will add to it if necessary.

National Guard Trail: no update

Conservation award progress – when to announce: We need to hear from Al Pratt. We will not be in time to announce the awards at town meeting. We'll decide when to present them after we have them.

Stewardship plans for IRCR (Isinglass River Conservation Reserve) and Bedford properties:

Don Clifford spoke up for the snowmobile club. He said that they are very interested in keeping their trail that goes through the property and connects this Pig Lane area with Nippo Lake. Kerry said that the club has been in existence since 1974 and that most of the trails date from about that time. He will try to find the exact dates for this trail. Since the IRCR property needs a wildlife - stewardship plan, having a snowmobile trail through it may be a problem. If we can show that it is a preexisting trail of a long time, it may be helpful. The club offered to help us fund-raise if we needed help to get the money needed for the plans.

Harmony had a grant form from the Piscataqua Region Estuary Partnership, but it is only for \$5,000.00 dollars. We will need about \$20,000.00 for the plans for the Isinglass River Conservation Reserve. Phil Auger thinks we may be able to get more money from other grants. The plans are required by law

within a year. Liz says that because the plan is required that it might fall under terms of purchase and we may be able to use some of our funds if the grants cannot be won.

Update on building permit variance application on discontinued road: being appealed.

Other: Charlie Moreno emailed an update about the Town Forest on February 10. He said that Ed Cutter had 2-3 more weeks of work to complete the harvest. Charlie has been working on the woods road construction summary specs with Deb Goard, Strafford County Forester, and Brook Smart and Jeff Tunley from the NRCS. The steps are as follow: 1. Hydrological study (NRCS-March) 2. Site survey (NRCS – April-May) 3. Bridge design (NRCS – June) 4. Wetland Permit submission (Extension will help – June) 5. Project showing (late summer) 6. Construction (during favorable weather after permits).

He went on to list some other good ideas from the meeting one of which was to ask for a request for proposals from contractors rather than a solicitation of bids. The RFP allows for discussion by the Commission about the various proposals and allows the selection of the best overall choice as to pricing, quality, experience, insurance, etc.

Cal wanted to know about the standing of a new possible land easement. Harmony will find out from Phil.

Jack wanted to know if the person starting logging operations off of 202A has all the proper permits. He also wanted to know what kind of permits we are getting for the town forest road. We are waiting for the final plans to arrive.

New Business none

Standing Committee Reports

Land Protection Group – nothing this time

Managed Growth Group – Harmony will see if they can get a meeting together so they can follow up on Dan's concerns (see above).

Water Quality Group – Bruce said that they had reports on the health of the rivers. The Isinglass and Mohawk are still in good shape.

Summary/Adjournment

Next meeting date: Monday, April 6, 2009

7:00 pm. Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Enz Page

