

Strafford Conservation Commission
Minutes
May 4, 2009

Present:

Liz Evans
Harmony Anderson
Carolyn Page
Al Pratt
Dave Perkins
Scott A. Young
Bruce Smith
Irving Johnson
Cal Schroeder

Guests:

Phil Auger

Opening and Introductions

The meeting was opened at 7:05 pm. A motion was made by Al and seconded by Scott to accept the April 2009 **minutes**. Approved.

Guest Presentations

Phil Auger/IRCR situation: Phil told us of a tent city growing on the banks of the Isinglass with slight exaggeration. He found two tents, many beer cans and trash everywhere. The police were notified and an infrared camera was set up. So far they have seen no suspects. Phil also said that ATV's were getting around the barriers to go riding under the power lines that go through the IRCR (Isinglass River Conservation Reserve). Fish & Game was called to try to put a stop to that. Other land trespass includes an abutter who has felled trees and piled other brush on the land. Phil suggested a letter from the Conservation Commission with a strong message that he must respect the boundary line. Phil will put up signs and walk the property line with him so there is no question where the boundary is.

New Projects: Phil then told us of some projects that he is working on to add more properties to the IRCR area. These owners have applied for inclusion in the Wetlands Reserve Program. Phil is confident that these properties are high on the list for approval. We have a purchase and sales agreement on one piece. Cal asked that we make sure that the p&s is still in effect and if it has an end date. Phil would like a letter from the Commission to this owner and his abutter. Phil and Harmony will discuss the focus of the letters. A large piece of property that is key to joining some already owned land has also become available. If the Wetlands Reserve Program buys the easement rights to this property, the town will then be able to purchase the land for a reduced price. Phil wanted approval to go ahead with that. The Commission unanimously agreed by consensus. Cal asked about possible logging of the property, but Phil didn't seem too hopeful that it was a possibility even though the WRP does allow for forest management. There are also three other possibilities; a gift of land in the area, one large piece that may be sold as a wood lot and a puzzle piece that holds the whole area together whose owner is unknown!

DES application none

Old Business

IRCR Sign Project Liz received some pictures of signs from other projects as samples of what we need to do.

Pike Project Update Rochester is trying to find \$3,500.00 for their share of the fees involved in preserving this piece. Dan Kern got a \$4,000.00 grant to help with the total.

Cahill Project walk date The estimated fees for this property have been lessened by \$3,000.00 for an estimated total of \$10,441.18 for this easement gift. The land includes an interesting cemetery, four fields, prime agricultural lands and two streams. There is a buyer for the property. The walk of this piece will be on May 12 at 4:30. We will meet on Willey Pond Road, last house on the right just before Camp Foss.

CTAP application update Harmony will let us know if the grant for the IRCR Stewardship plan comes though. Phil is still pursuing other grants.

Fire Department parking area update Bruce reported on the site walk he did with Scott. He says that the land in question is a jurisdictional wetland, but it does not function as a vernal pool. Bruce had a very nice book about vernal pools. He will try to get some for us.

Update on Roberts Road variance The new building is going to be allowed to be built on this discontinued road. The property buyer and his lawyer found a document from 1976 mentioning a building approved by the Planning Board on the abutting piece of land. The town attorney approved of the deal and the Selectmen signed off on it. A building permit is still needed. Phil cautioned that this is a dangerous precedent. He will notify the School Board (who own to the middle of Roberts Road) so they can make sure that the road to the construction is moved so as not to infringe on their land.

Town Hall landscaping information Althea Weeks did all of the planting around the town hall. Her plans for the rest of the landscaping are not complete at this time. The crabapple trees need to be planted yet and she bought some trees from the Strafford County Conservation District plant sale (hopefully sugar maples).

Other The state is looking for more information from the National Guard about their proposed road. They are concerned with the stone ford that will have vehicles going through flowing water.

Scott helped with a successful bird walk on the IRCR on Saturday. They saw or heard 32 species.

New Business

Cal announced the Coheco River Watershed Coalition's annual Coheco River Sweep from Rochester to Dover. Bring your canoe or kayak May 16 at 9:00 to Isinglass Park. Activities afterwards at the County Farm.

Representatives from the Strafford Rivers Conservancy want to come to talk to us at our June meeting.

Standing Committee Reports

Land Protection Group – nothing

Managed Growth Group – meeting next Tuesday

Water Quality Group – nothing

Summary/Adjournment Cal moved to adjourn and Bruce seconded.

Next meeting date: Monday, June 1, 2009

7:00 pm. Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Enz Page