

Strafford Conservation Commission

Minutes

March 7, 2011

Present: Liz Evans, Scott Young, Kerry Omand, Bruce Smith, Harmony Anderson, and Irving Johnson

Guest: Phil Auger

Opening and Introductions

The meeting was opened at 7:14. We approved the Minutes of the last meeting with the amendment that the grant request for the IRCR parking area and trail work for \$19,720.00 had been submitted, not received.

Guest Presentations

DES applications none

Old Business

IRCR Grant Application Liz volunteered to handle the paperwork associated with the grant should we receive it and Scott volunteered to be her apprentice in the process.

Evans Mountain Town/Blue Hills Foundation meeting update Phil, Harmony, and Liz along with reported about their second meeting with George Lovejoy to work out ownership details of the Evans Mountain property and stewardship considerations. They will meet again this month. The plan is to leave about half the property on the tax rolls in Blue Hills Foundation ownership and the other half in Town ownership with conservation easements on all of the property guaranteeing public access, and to work together on stewardship plans.

Fire Station parking lot proposal news Harmony reported that she had met with the officers of the Fire and Rescue Department. The final decision from DES denying the permit for the lot had just come in. The officers had not seen this, but read the copy Liz had provided. Harmony explained that the Conservation Commission (CC) is charged by state RSA to protect wetlands which had been the basis for their recommendation against placing the lot in the wetland, and stressed that the CC has only recommendation power, not final say. Other groups had also sent opinions against the parking lot plan to DES. The Fire Department officers explained that even though there is parking at the Waldron Store and Church, they have concerns about those lots being plowed out in time for them. They all must now report to the station and not drive their own vehicles to fires for insurance reasons. They believe their insurance does not cover them on the lot across the street. The officers recognized that their application had not expressed these concerns. Harmony said that even if they resubmitted an application which they had the right to do within 30 days, in spite of any sympathy the CC might feel for those difficulties, it would be the CC's responsibility to come down on the side of protecting the wetland.

Trails Committee Several people have volunteered to work on a trails committee, but we agreed there is no point in having a meeting until we know whether we have received the Recreational Trails Program grant.

New Business

Warrant Articles of interest There are no Warrant articles bearing on Conservation Topics. It might be appropriate for someone to update the group about the success of the Evans Mountain fundraising and thank them for their help.

Standing Committee Reports

Water Quality Bruce Smith brought in the newly published New Hampshire Volunteer River Assessment Program (VRAP) report for the 2010 Isinglass River Water Quality testing season. Bruce mentioned the six testing stations, the three testing dates in the summer of 2010 and some of the data from the report. The river is in good shape with the eight qualities measured meeting or exceeding state standards—oxygen levels, for example are better than state standards. The river is slightly more acid beyond the town limits than recommended, but that is probably because tributaries run through peat lands. Harmony will write about the report in the Calendar column.

Other Kerry noted that the town website lists the CC meeting time as 6:00pm. Liz will see to fixing that.

Adjournment The next meeting will be on April 4th at 7:00pm at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted

Harmony Anderson