

Campton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2014;7pm

Members present: Jess Halm, Alisoun Hodges, Jane Kellogg, Rebecca Steeves, Tammy Wooster

Others Present: Jack Dorsey

Jess served as chair and opened the meeting at 7:05 pm.

1) Minutes:

Alisoun made a motion to approve the April meeting minutes. Jane seconded the motion and all were in favor.

2) Event/Project Reporting:

Jane proposed that as we cover each event on the agenda we should identify which need follow up communication.

a. Squam Lakes Conservation Service (SLCS) info session report:

On April 17th Alisoun and Jane attended the Beebe River Tract community forum hosted by the SLCS and Nancy Bell of the Conservation Fund. Alisoun said that the SLCS wanted to know what everyone thought of the land about to be purchased by the Conservation Fund and how it has historically been used. Alisoun enjoyed hearing what people had to say and learned that the land is highly used for hunting fishing and recreation. About 40 people attended and were split into groups with each being assigned a scribe. Jane said there was a similar turnout at the Sandwich forum, and heard it was interesting how different the sessions were from one another. Select Board member Karl Kelly attended, as well as Tom Wagner from the Forest Service.

Jane reported that there was one family from the Eastern Corners Road area who expressed concern that increased recreational use of the area would cause disruption in that part of town. One question posed at the meeting was if money and time were no object, what would people do with the land? One response was to turn it over to the Forest Service and make it part of the White Mountain National Forest. Rebecca asked if the land is currently public or private. Jane answered that it is privately owned by a timber company and public access has been allowed, but there have been issues with people damaging gate areas. Jack added that he has tried to get to the Hall ponds from the Perch Pond side but there is not a lot of road access and road conditions are poor. Nancy Bell stated that after purchase of the approximately 5000 acres in Campton and Sandwich, the CF will place a Conservation Easement on teh property. Jess asked if the easement holder has been identified yet to which Jane said no, but presumes it will be the SLCS or similar sized land trust. After a few years, the

CF would then intend to sell the property, at which time new deals will have to be made. One potential future scenario may be that the land will be subdivided with a few different owners. Another option could be a future Campton Town Forest for some portion of the land. Jane will follow up with the SLCS thanking them for hosting the forum and reiterating CCC support for the project.

b. Friends of the Pemi/Livermore Falls:

CCC members were not able to attend the most recent Friends of the Pemi/Livermore Falls meeting, but Jack Dorsey was. Jack admitted that he had difficulty following the discussion since he had little history of the project and that he came away with lots of questions. He said there were 30-40 people there and there with a facilitator who did a good job at trying to keep the communication organized. Jack said after the meeting he visited both sides of the river to familiarize himself with the area. He was confused about the ownership of the properties and Alisoun explained that it appears that the Holderness side was well on its way to becoming a State Park. She had recently had a conversation with a State parks Representative and came away with the impression that plans for the Campton side of the river are on hold and that most of the resources being employed for the summer focused on the Holderness side. Jane agreed that this is likely, especially given the obstacles in dealing with the mill, the work required to create a historic display, and the safety issues associated with the gorge on the Campton side. Alisoun wondered if there is anything else the CCC could be doing to advance the Campton side of the project. All agreed that since the Rotary is the lead entity of the project, there are no CCC action items at this time, aside from staying informed by attending meetings and work events. Alisoun will find out the date of the tree/brush clearing work day scheduled for May. Jess added that it is because of Alisoun and Jane's involvement that the Campton side was even considered as being part of this long term project.

c. Rumney CC Lands Conservation Workshop Report:

Jane attended the Rumney Lands Conservation Workshop on May 3rd and shared what she learned. There were representatives from the Rumney CC/Quincy Bog, The Forest Society, and The NH Timberland Assoc (NHTA). Topics covered included landowner liability, state laws, and the easement process. Jane reminded the group that prior to the workshop she and Jess had sent a mailing to the larger landowners in town to inform them of the event. One of the landowners they had sent a notice to did attend and Jane got their contact information for future Campton Bog Watershed conversation. Bette Jo Taffe asked Jane if the CCC was ready to plan a joint Bog watershed initiative meeting, to which Jane said yes. Finally, Jane reported that she there is a workshop to be held 5/16 comprised of two tours. Attendees will meet at Plain Jane's Diner and from there there will be field trips to Precision Lumber and Green Acre Woodland.

d. Roadside Clean-up:

May 4th was the CCC Spring Adopt a Highway Roadside Cleanup. Jane signed a card thanking the Kelley's who again graciously volunteered their time cleaning up the stretch of road from Pattee Corner to Dewey Circle the day before. Rebecca, Jane and Alisoun took care of the rest of the route, and Alisoun expressed surprise at how little trash there was by the off ramp. Jane mentioned that she had been on a trash pickup roll before the event and hit the area around the Bog Road pull-off where she filled 6 trash bags.

e. Northern Pass Meeting:

Tammy attended the May 4 Sight Evaluation Committee (SEC) Informational Meeting relative to the Northern Pass (NP) project. She said that the meeting was specifically for Select Board members from towns along the proposed NP route, but the meeting was also open to the public. Other attendees from Campton were Charlie Wheeler, Tom Mullen, George Wright and Ann Verow. Tammy said that there was a panel of attorneys who presented information and advice relative to the SEC process. The reason for the meeting was that it is expected that Northern Pass LLC will be submitting an application for SEC approval within the next 6 months, at which time towns along the route will be expected to weigh in. In order to have a voice in the SEC process, towns have to file to intervene and then will have to participate in an adjudicative hearing. Tammy said that the whole process seemed intimidating and that it was recommended that towns organize now to identify individuals or groups who will serve to intervene. Tammy said that interveners can expect to be cross examined by expert witnesses NP is expected to have. It was recommended by the attorneys that towns consider allocating funds to possibly secure attorneys or their own expert witnesses. Another thing towns can do is to look closely at their Master Plans to ensure protective language is in place, since Master Plans have to be considered by the SEC. Tammy learned that ordinances can be put in place, such as the ridge line ordinance adopted by the town of Easton. Tammy said that the big take home message was that towns need to band together and combine resources, for example one long detailed letter from all of the White Mountain National Forest Conservation Commissions would have greater impact than individual CC's duplicating each other. Tammy learned that passage of HB 245 relative to changes to the SEC process will impose a new standard that projects must serve the public interest, which could be a challenge for NP, and some consider it a game changer. One of the main organizers of the meeting was Susan Schibanoff who said that next she will be meeting individually with Select Boards of towns along the route. Jane said that it will be important to have Planning Board representation present when Susan comes to Campton. Tammy said that she e-mailed Charlie Wheeler the day after the meeting thanking him for attending and that we should wait to learn what steps the board will consider in preparation for the SEC process. In the meantime she will e-mail Susan and ask her if the CCC can be notified when she comes to Campton so that we can encourage Planning Board participation.

f. Drinking Water Protection Meeting:

Jane and Tammy attended a meeting on May 7 at the Owl's Nest hosted by representatives from the Forest Service and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The purpose of the meeting was to unveil the NH Drinking Water Improvement Partnership which came out of passage of the 2014 Farm Bill. Jane explained that The Pemi River and Merrimack watersheds were identified as the most threatened drinking water supplies in the nation, due to projected land use changes and population growth. A Pemi River Watershed Focus Area has been delineated and includes Campton. A large sum of money is now available for projects relative to land management and protection to improve/ensure water quality. Jane gave examples of how the money has already been put to use on trail projects subsequent to T.S. Irene such as the Greeley Pond Trail. Plans are underway to make improvements to Triploli Road and Russell Pond camping areas due to water quality impacts. Conservation Commissions were invited to the meeting to help identify potential landowners who may be able to utilize the funds for easement expenses, forest management plans, or land improvements relative to water quality. CCC members took a moment to brainstorm potential landowners and the best way to get this information out to them. Tammy said that after the meeting she shared the information with a large landowner family she knew in Campton who is currently clearing their land for farming and they were receptive to learning more so she connected them with NRCS representative Beth Ann Finlay. Jane suggested a follow up e-mail to Beth Ann to offer continuing help in spreading the word and offer to provide a list of relevant Campton landowners.

3. Master Plan Work:

Jane reported that the Planning Board finished reviewing the Chapter 8 revisions that that the CCC recommended and that they seemed well received. Jane didn't think there has been a work session yet to review the Chapter 10 Master Plan revisions. Jane reminded the group that our next work session focus should be the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) updates which were put on hold due to the timing of the planning Board Master Plan work. Tammy added that CCC website updates also need to be done.

4. BWNA/PCP

a. Nature Nights:

There has been no word from the Rey Center since we learned that Leigh Ann Reynolds left her position and we were informed that there will be a replacement education coordinator. Jess will e-mail the Rey Center and find out if they still plan to hold Nature Nights this summer. Jess said that she recently visited Leah Gray and she is doing well. Leah has generously offered to contribute \$100 towards the funding of Nature Nights.

b. Trail Work:

Jess said that she will be visiting both PCP and BWNA properties with her kids to do some trail work in the coming days and will report back any needed repairs. She also plans to try out mowing the PCP walking path. Alisoun will make sure that there is adequate trail head supply of BWNA guidebooks.

5. FYI/Other:

Jane reported that she was contacted by Frank Mitchell from the Cooperative Extension asking permission to use two photos he saw on the Campton website for use in a Taking Action for Wildlife newsletter. The request was forwarded to Lea Stewart since one of the photos was taken by her. Jane will follow up with Melissa Greenawalt to see if she has the original Covered Bridge photo requested.

Paul Yelle asked if the CCC is interested in participating in the Halloween History Event this year and all agreed that we should participate but perhaps in a different format so as not to conflict with other parts of the event. Tammy reminded the group of Leigh Ann Reynolds idea to identify a conservation-minded individual who may have been buried in the cemetery. Jess will confirm CCC involvement with Paul and tell him we will work on the details.

This conversation reminded Jane of an inquiry that was forwarded to her from Ann Marie relative to green cemeteries. She has been playing phone tag with Nancy Donahue and will share more when she connects with her.

Mail opened included the NH DES Supply Lines Newsletter, and a returned dues check from the NH Assoc. of Natural Resource Scientists. Jane will follow up with Ann Marie to find out exactly when the NHANRS dues were paid.

Meeting adjourned 08:50 pm
Next meeting :June 11th, 2014;7pm
Alisoun will chair

