

**Campton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
February 3, 2016;7pm**

Members present: Shannon Garnsey, Jess Halm, Alisoun Hodges, Jane Kellogg, Dave Peeler, Rebecca Steeves, Tammy Wooster

Dave Peeler served as chair and called the meeting to order at 7:08pm. Alisoun moved to approve the January meeting minutes. Shannon seconded the motion and all were in favor.

1) Northern Pass update/Letter from Holderness CC

Alisoun attended the recent SEC hearing in Lincoln where opposition greatly outnumbered support for the proposed Northern Pass Project. Continued calls for complete burial along the entire route were repeatedly made. Alisoun reported that NH CACR 14, a bipartisan bill is now pending in the House Legislative Administration Committee. The bill relates to government of right, providing that the people of NH have the right of local community self government. Larry Spencer, chair of the Holderness CC, sent an email to Jane, copying her on a letter that was sent to the Holderness Select Board. The letter requested that the Select Board include some additional points in their petition to Intervene in the Northern Pass SEC permitting process. Specifically, concern was expressed regarding potential impacts /delays to the Livermore Falls project development on the Campton side. Early stages of planning are in progress for a parking area and access to the mill site, and work associated with burial of the NP lines along route 3 could be disruptive. Larry suggested that Campton intervene as a more directly impacted town, and also since the line goes by the BWNA. The group discussed the issue and agreed that intervention relative to Livermore Falls should be initiated by either the Campton Select Board, the Friends of the Pemi group, or the state since it is the owner of the property. Potential impacts to BWNA have already been dismissed since the line is being buried in the ROW and our interpretation of the NP maps suggest the line will be on the opposite side of the road.

Upcoming Northern Pass hearing dates and public comment period deadlines were reviewed. The Grafton County DOE Public Hearing relative to the Draft EIS is on March 9th, 5 pm at the Waterville Valley Conference Center. This conflicts with Town Meeting, and Shannon will contact the Public Counsel to see if this date can be changed. Jess and Tammy will draft comments that have to be submitted by April 4th. The next SEC The next SEC public hearing date for Grafton County is to be announced. After reviewing the Northern Pass Shoreland Permit application, Tammy found some inconsistencies and asked the group to confirm. Consensus was that there were confusing and contradictory statements relative to the line crossing the Pemi which need clarification. Jane will follow up with Normandeau Associates.

2) Bog Walk Review:

January 30th was the CCC's 4th annual walk around Campton Bog in search of wildlife tracks, which was led by Lea Stewart. A record 35 people attended, the weather was beautiful, and everyone enjoyed the event. Donna Rhodes from the Record Enterprise showed up to photograph and report on the walk. Tracks observed included, mink or possibly ermine, fox, coyote, gray squirrel, possibly flying squirrel, and bobcat. The highlight was finding muskrat tracks and scat. Requests were made for more similar events in the future, and we will continue to explore opportunities to get kids and adults outdoors learning about Campton's natural resources.

3) Friends of the Pemi Report:

Jane reported that she and Alisoun attended the Jan 27th Friends meeting. There were individuals representing various state agencies including DHR, DES, the Parks Dept. and DRED. Most of the conversation focused on developing plans for the Campton side of the falls. Work to acquire more land for a proper parking area is in progress, as well as planning for handicapped access to the mill ruins via a walkway over the old stone abutments. There was talk of redoing the fencing at the top of the mill, and adding a viewing platform and placard describing the site's history. Jane said that the option of removing the ruins to allow the river to revert back to its natural state was discussed but the Historic Resources people thought the site's historic value was great and the ruins are worth preserving. Steve Rand presented his slides of what the river looked like before and after the turbines were removed, and there was discussion of damming up the turbine space to prevent further erosion. The state is still working on getting signage to keep people out of the area until it is stabilized, and to inform of future plans. Some of the funding for this work will come from the \$150,000 Groton Wind Farm settlement. There was no mention of the Pumpkinseed Bridge, presumably because the owner of the bridge has not been confirmed. There was no Dam Bureau representation to clarify whether the site is listed as a dam, but possibly will be at the next meeting on March 23rd @ RMI. DES also attended to discuss permitting issues of the different development scenarios. Jane shared the addresses of two website links: <http://www.nhstateparks.org/visit/state-parks/livermore-falls-recreation-area.aspx> is the link to the LF Recreational Area website. <http://www.nhstateparks.org/uploads/pdf/Livermore-Falls CLR.pdf> is the link to the Cultural Landscape Report and Environmental Assessment. We will provide these links at our Town Meeting display.

4) Wildlife Action Plan (WAP)

Alisoun recently attended a meeting in Concord, where Fish & Game presented the newest version of the WAP, which was last updated in 2005. She came home with several brochures, some describing NH habitat types, and others detailing how landowners and communities are taking action for wildlife. The CCC's first Frozen Bog Walk was the cover photo of one of the brochures. Alisoun will inquire about getting more copies for us to display and share at Town meeting.

5) Nancy Bell Correspondence:

Alisoun has been in touch with Nancy Bell from the Conservation Fund, working on securing a date to meet with the Select Board for a Beebe River property update, which has been set for April 4th from 6:45-7:30. Alisoun also requested Beebe River Tract materials to display at Town meeting, but has yet to hear back. Jess will be traveling to Vermont soon and offered to get in touch with Nancy and arrange to meet for a materials pickup.

6) NRI progress:

CCC members worked individually on assigned sections of the NRI in January, and Dave and Alisoun have met to work together on an editorial review of the document. The next work session will be on Feb 17th; 5:30 at the town office. Jane will confirm with Carina. Dave and Alisoun will serve as a work group making the edits with one of us. Shannon compiled a bibliography and posted it as a Google Doc for review.

7) NH Community Rights Amendment:

Jess shared an email forwarded by George Wright, and written by the NH Community Rights Network seeking electronic signatures on a petition to adopt a NH Community Rights Amendment. The movement is gaining momentum as more large scale energy projects seek siting in NH. Tammy said she signed a version of this petition last year. Alisoun thought this to be the same as the HCACR14 bill discussed at the SEC hearing.

8) Alexandria CC Photo Calendar:

Jess learned of a photo calendar created by the Alexandria CC and thought it would make a great future project in Campton. A contest for scenic local photography was held and 67 entries were submitted and then displayed at the town hall and library. 13 winning photos were selected and made into calendars. Next year's photo theme will be wildlife. All thought this could be a fun project for Campton with the double benefit of sprucing up the bare town office walls while engaging the community in capturing Campton's beauty.

9) Forest Conservation Zone Public Hearing:

Jane attended the public hearing on a proposed amendment to the Forest Conservation Zone to allow multiple family dwellings. The hearing was not well attended, and Jane learned that this came about because of inquiries from people wanting to renovate their homes for additional space to house aging family members and stay at home older kids. She also learned that there are already a few multiple family dwellings within the zone, and the amendment would bring them into compliance. Jane pointed out that there is already a process for fulfilling individual requests by way of a Zoning Board of Adjustment variance. She also asked whether this was opening the door for promoting future condo development and was told definitely not, but she doesn't see anything in the zoning language that would prevent this. The proposed amendment will be on the election ballot.

10) Bobcat Hunting/Trapping proposal:

Rebecca and Jane attended the Feb 1st public hearing at the State House on the proposed limited bobcat hunting/trapping season. Rebecca took notes, and brought several of her interested students to observe the process. There were approx. 8 opposed for every 1 for the proposal, and the ratio at the Lancaster hearing was closer to 50:50. Rebecca said she learned a great deal about the structure and function of the Fish and Game Commission and was concerned that all of its members are hunters and will be deciding the fate of the proposal. Tammy said that in Mass the Board is required to have non-hunting members. Todd Baldwin, the Grafton County commissioner was not present at the hearing but has spoken in favor of the season. Jane said that the people who stood up in opposition were very well spoken, and explained the self regulating mechanism of mammal predators. She added that she went into the hearing thinking that the proposal was whether to hold a season at all, and learned that the hearing was specific to the rulemaking process. She wondered where the publicity was when the initial proposal went out. People who supported the season argued that their heritage and traditions were at risk of being lost. The CCC was asked by the Stoddard CC to join in opposing the season, but a formal CCC response will not be given since there was not unanimous agreement. We will act as individuals, and have until February 10th to submit written comments. Jane will circulate Todd Baldwin's email, the final vote will be on Feb 17th.

11) Other Business:

The NHACC dues bill is still in our mailbox, waiting for payment after town meeting. Carina Parks was invited to our meeting but is busy with school and will try and come to a spring meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 9:21 pm

Next meeting March 2, 2016

Dave will chair again

Respectfully submitted,
Tammy Wooster