

Conservation Commission

Wednesday, July 1, 2009
Corner Meeting House
Belmont, New Hampshire

Members Present: Chairman Ken Knowlton, Denise Naiva, David Morse, Scott Rolfe, Keith Bennett
Members Absent: Ginger Wells-Kay(e), Ward Peterson(u)
Alternates Present: Carol Fairfield (6:10)
Alternates Absent: Magnus McLetchie(e), Mark Lewandoski(u)
Staff: Rick Ball, Denise Rollins

The Chairman opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

BOARD'S ACTION-MINUTES:

MOTION: On a motion by D. Naiva, seconded by K. Bennett, the members voted to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2009 meeting as written. (5-0)

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT:

Alvin Nix told the members that his project could be to build some birdhouses and duck boxes to be placed in the Town Forest and the Sanborn Farm property. He needed more details for that project and others that the members had mentioned previously. S. Rolfe suggested a small kiosk for the Tioga property which would list acceptable uses and a map of the property since they may not be able to put trails there. D. Naiva said they could have 2 small kiosks at the Sanborn Farm property for the 2 entrances. K. Knowlton mentioned the bridges they would like to see built at the Town Forest also. K. Knowlton gave Alvin the plans he had for the birdhouse and duck box. Alvin will be meeting with some of the members to walk the Sanborn Farm property to view it and see where he should place them. He will also meet with K. Knowlton and do the same at the Town Forest property.

The Chairman appointed C. Fairfield as a voting member for tonight's meeting.

TOWN FOREST:

The members set a date of Saturday, September 26 to do the work on the universal accessible trail. S. Rolfe said that he and K. Knowlton will go out a few days before to flag it. K. Knowlton said he will let Tim Hayes know. S. Rolfe confirmed with R. Ball that the town trucks can be used to deliver the material.

5 RIVERS PROPOSAL:

The members have reviewed the conservation easement proposal for the Tioga property from the Five Rivers Conservation Trust.

K. Knowlton is concerned with the provision on eminent domain. He wondered if this layer of protection can be taken away.

The members only had a few changes that they wanted to make to the proposal. D. Naiva suggested they change one of the purposes to conserve “and manage” forests and wetlands for the benefits of native plants and wildlife. The other purposes they agreed to include are:

To assure that the property will be retained forever in its predominately undeveloped, forested, and open space condition.

To provide for low impact, non-commercial outdoor recreational use by the general public on the property.

To maintain water quality and aquatic habitat and/or to protect the undeveloped water frontage, to which the property provides access and upon which it fronts.

To provide for the scenic enjoyment of the general public.

One of the Use Limitations states that the Property shall be maintained in perpetuity as open space without there being conducted thereon any industrial or commercial activities, except agriculture and forestry. The members discussed whether they should exclude “except agriculture and forestry”. S. Rolfe questioned if forestry supporting wildlife habitat will be permitted. Also if they harvested timber are they permitted to sell it. D. Naiva said that in her letter to the Commission Sarah Pillsbury has offered to meet with them to address any questions. R. Ball said he will invite her to attend their August meeting. The members agreed to leave in the remaining Use Limitations as written.

The members would also like to add additional clauses. The first one limits the recreational use of ATVs while allowing snowmobiles. The second one says the Commission shall not post to prohibit the public from accessing and using the property. These two will be added to Use Limitations. They would also like to reserve the right to permit archaeological investigations on the property after receiving written approval from them.

D. Naiva asked if the junk piles have been removed yet. R. Ball told the members that G. Wells-Kay said that Ward Peterson and John Peverly will be cleaning up the property when the soil dries out. There is a \$7500 donation requested and a legal fee of \$750 is required. S. Rolfe suggested the members write a letter to the Board of Selectmen telling them why the Conservation Commission members want the easement since the Board of Selectmen will have to sign it when it is finalized.

SANBORN FARM:

The members reviewed the draft Conservation Stewardship plan for the Sanborn Farm property. They discussed the three places to access the property – directly off Durrell Mountain Road, Rogers Road and Middle Route. D. Naiva said they need a plan to tell people where they can park to access the property especially in the winter. K. Kowlton said it would be nice to see people use it to cross country ski. They decided that the Rogers Road access would be used for winter access. S. Rolfe suggested they open the gate there in the winter which would allow them to push the snow in for parking. K. Bennett volunteered to plow that area out in the winter since he lives nearby. D. Naiva asked where people can park in the summer. K. Bennett said on Durrell Mountain Road along the road would be a good place. It was decided that they would put up signs stating that no motorized vehicles are allowed. K. Bennett said he could do this.

The members talked about mowing the field. D. Naiva said they should do it every two or three years. K. Bennett suggested they alternate and do half one year and the other half the next. There is a little over eight acres of field and he has seen some deer and turkeys feeding out there. They could also maintain a thirty foot perimeter of transitional growth for other species.

One of their short term goals the members decided is to seed the roads. They would like to stabilize the banks and roads with bank mix or where erosion is happening. S. Rolfe said they need to keep the roads open but need to stabilize them first then mow them every two or three years.

Under historic uses of the property the members decided to change Local Snowmobile trail to Abutting Snowmobile Corridor trail since the snowmobile trail is adjacent to the property and not on it. The other uses listed are Fishing, Hunting and Walking.

Under the Inventory section the members removed Fragile & Unique Areas and added Wetlands to Water/Wetlands Resources. R. Ball said he will get the description of Soils from the soils map and add it. They agreed that the various inventories listed are a project to be completed in the future. Some of the members will be walking the property again soon.

For the Recommendations the following were listed: Develop timber management plan, Maintain existing trails to facilitate access by all abilities, Install identification and rules signage and Develop/Improve access. They would like to see 2 kiosks put up, one at Rogers Road and the other at Middle Route listing the rules and a map of the property and possibly a history fact sheet of the property. S. Rolfe said that the forest management doesn't need to be done for at least 10 years so they can make an assessment in 10 years. D. Naiva said they could get an initial assessment from Andy Fast.

The members agreed on the Goals that were listed. They said that they would be the general overall goals. They are to provide for safe access; promote recreational and educational uses; preserve the natural environment; provide for continuance of recreational trail systems and greenways; and to preserve undeveloped frontage and natural views along an existing developed road that is a gateway in to Belmont.

The members did make some changes to the Operational Rules that were listed. They decided on the following permitted rules:

- Pedestrian uses including cross country skiing and snowshoeing

- Hunting in accordance with the NH law

- Fishing in accordance with NH law

- Non-motorized vehicles except for vehicles for disabled individuals; snowmobiles on designated trails (local traffic only).

The prohibited rules they agreed on are:

- Dump or deposit rubbish, waste, leaves, brush, paper or other offensive or unsightly substance
- substance – use of ASF Property is “carry in/carry out” relating to personal rubbish
- Possess alcoholic beverages
- Remove or damage in any way any structure, plant or natural feature
- Construct or erect any permanent deer stand
- Overnight camping
- Kindling of any fire
- Erection of any structure
- Trapping
- Motorized wheeled vehicles except in certain specific instances with permission (example: hauling a harvested animal)
- Boats
- Fireworks
- Overnight parking

STAFF REPORT:

TRAILS GRANT:

R. Ball said he sent the paperwork. The Governor and Council meet July 15th and believes they should receive the check by August 1st.

WETLANDS STUDY:

R. Ball told the members that Stoney Ridge has made the corrections and are gathering up the digital geo data and will send it. He will post it on the town website.

SUN LAKE VILLAGE:

R. Ball said the Board of Selectmen have agreed on the lower assessment that Mr. Brouillard had requested. Mr. Brouillard has until September 15, 2009 to pay his current use penalties.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

Chairman Knowlton moved to enter non-public session at 8:30 p.m in accordance with RSA 91-A:3.II(d). Those agreed were S. Rolfe, D. Naiva, K. Bennett, C. Fairfield and D. Morse

The members agreed to come out of non-public session at 8:40 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: On a motion by D. Naiva, seconded by S. Rolfe, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. (6-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Rollins

