

Conservation Commission

Wednesday, July 7, 2010
Corner Meeting House
Belmont, New Hampshire

Members Present:	Chairman Ken Knowlton, Scott Rolfe, Keith Bennett, David Morse (6:07), Nicholas Coates
Members Absent:	Denise Naiva(e), Carol Fairfield(e)
Alternates Absent:	M. Lewandoski(u), Brent O'Brien(u)
Staff:	Rick Ball, Denise Rollins

Chairman Knowlton opened the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

OLD HOME DAY:

Gretta-Olson Wilder of the Belmont Old Home Day Committee was present to update the members about the plans for Old Home Day. She read a draft of the dedication about the Conservation Commission that will be put in the Old Home Day booklets this year. The Commission is a vital part of preserving Belmont's natural resources. Because of them the town has secured more conservation land and have developed the town forest. More people are aware of the places conserved in Belmont. She said that since 2010 is dedicated to them as a group they have the honor of being the grand marshal of the parade. As a group the Committee would like to make them the head of the parade. She told them to think about how they would like to lead the parade. She said they can't ride in a car because it's not environmentally conscious. It was suggested they ride horses or bicycles. K. Knowlton felt that foot power would be the most practical.

Ms. Olson-Wilder said that instead of having a band in the middle of the day as they have in the past old home days they will be having an interactive exhibit with animals by the Squam Lakes Science Center. She said they will also have the Forever Locked Moose display which is on a trailer. They have also contacted several groups for information booths. They are looking to get a recycling mobile trailer which is pulled behind a truck and has 6 bins. She said she will notify the people the committee has contacted and welcomed any ideas from them.

S. Rolfe will be doing the bird walk on Saturday, July 10th at the Sanborn Farm Conservation Land and will be doing the tree ID walk on Saturday, July 17th at the Jeff Marden Town Forest.

Chairman Knowlton said he would appreciate it if the members attended Old Home Day.

NEW MEMBER:

Nicholas Coates was sworn in as a full voting member by Town Clerk/Tax Collector Cynthia DeRoy. The members welcomed him to the Commission.

BELKNAP COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT:

Lisa Morin of the Belknap County Conservation District (BCCD) was present to follow up with the members the discussion they had with her at their meeting in May about hay co-ops. The BCCD is a county entity and is non regulatory. They do outreach and facilitate conservation programs and also help towns write grants. At the May meeting the members talked about the change in the biosolids ordinance and it's impact on the agricultural community.

She gave the members a handout about the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). It is a voluntary conservation program and supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP farmers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land. EQIP in NH offers financial assistance to help off-set the costs of eligible conservation practices. Any producer engaged in livestock or crop production on eligible land may apply for EQIP. Ms. Morin suggested getting farmers together who might be interested in this program and bring them in to present the information to them.

BCCD has already set up a Farm Bill informational session on July 14th. It is a power point presentation which will introduce the farmers to the Farm Bill Programs. Mike Lynch who is the District Conservationist for Belknap and Merrimack counties will be presenting it. EQIP is one of the programs along with Agricultural Management Assistance, Conservation Stewardship Program, Farm & Ranch Lands Protection Program, Grassland Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program and Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program. She said they did a general mailing early on for this session and put it in the newspapers. She said she will come into the Belmont townhall so she can find out who owns farmland so she can notify them.

K. Knowlton said that because of the stance the Commission took against biosolids they would like to facilitate alternatives for the farmers, ways that the farmers can get together and share costs or cut costs.

The members talked about arranging for a farmers market on the property near the mill. It was discussed at the charrette that a structure could be built for this. Ms. Morin said there is a NH Farmers Market Association.

K. Knowlton asked Ms. Morin if she was familiar with the program in Enfield where there is a 25 acre field and the owner rents it out. She said it is called Community Supported Agriculture. She suggested maybe doing a program about this.

BOARD'S ACTION-MINUTES:

MOTION: On a motion by S. Rolfe, seconded by K. Bennett, the members voted to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2010 meeting as written. (4-0)

STAFF REPORT:**AQUATIC RESROUCES MITIGATION GRANT:**

R. Ball said he did the site walk of the Tioga River Wildlife and Conservation Area with the selection committee to view the glossy buckthorn.

K. Knowlton asked how much it will cost to mitigate the whole area. R. Ball said the removal cost is \$580 an acre so it would cost about \$31,000. Their match would be about \$4,800 which would be for the work that Stoney Ridge Environmental would do to advise the people doing the actual work.

R. Ball said that the committee doing the walk seemed receptive to it. They gave Tracey a good question and answer session. He also said it seems like there's enough money to do it. It will be done in 2 phases over 2 years then they would have to revisit it for the maintenance.

THE TOWN FOREST TRAIL:

R. Ball said that he met with Tim Hayes who will give him an estimate to do the work. K. Bennett thought that after this project gets completed they should see about getting the pond stocked for trout and make it a handicapped fishing area. S. Rolfe told the members that the beavers are back in there building the dam back up. R. Ball said that if there's money left over from the WHIP Grant they should plant stream and pond side vegetation to encourage wildlife.

TIOGA RIVER WILDLIFE AND CONSERVATION AREA:

R. Ball talked with Ward Peterson and he is willing to go down and remove the illegally dumped tires and white goods. He just needs to know when they would like him to do it. K. Knowlton said the beginning of August would be good. R. Ball said that the Public Works Department will bring the debris to Bestway after they are brought to the front of the property.

OTHER BUSINESS:**RIVER CLEAN UP:**

S. Rolfe suggested that the members get together with the Tilton Conservation Commission and do a joint river clean up project. The stretch of the Winnepesaukee River in Lochmere where the towns border each other there is a lot of trash that has been deposited there. The members agreed that would be a good idea. S. Rolfe said it is really shallow there and would only need about 4 or 5 members between the two Commissions to do it.

URBAN FOREST PROGRAM:

S. Rolfe said he has read on the Cornell website about developing an urban forest program in communities. He read that a community can plant 10 trees for \$500 a year. This would go along with the streetscaping idea that they talked about at a previous meeting. He thought it could be possible to initiate an in town project where the Commission could come in and plant trees. People could donate money or their time or where they would like to have a tree planted. In the Tree City USA program the town must establish an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita. This is another option that the town has but a tree ordinance must be passed first. His suggestion would be to start by putting

\$500 a year into a local program for street trees. The Commission could get a lot of public relations from this. K. Knowlton said they could plant a tree somewhere in the downtown area and dedicate it as the liberty tree. They could place a plaque near it stating the date when it was planted. They would work with the Board of Selectmen to choose the place. S. Rolfe said he could develop a baseline plan with their ideas.

ANDREW SANBORN FARM:

K. Bennett asked the members if he should mow half of the field this year. Last year he did half of it and left half of it. The members agreed that he should mow the other half this year and leave a 30 foot perimeter.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: On a motion by K. Bennett, seconded by S. Rolfe, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 7 :15 p.m. (4-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Rollins