

Conservation Commission

Wednesday, October 6, 2010
Corner Meeting House
Belmont, New Hampshire

Members Present: Chairman Ken Knowlton, Carol Fairfield, Denise Naiva,
David Morse, Nicholas Coates(6:40)
Members Absent: Scott Rolfe, Keith Bennett
Alternates Absent: Mark Lewandoski, Brent O'Brien
Staff: Rick Ball, Denise Rollins

The Chairman opened the meeting at 6: 05 p.m.

George Conododemetraky was present to talk to the members. He said that when the master plan was written it was agreed that the agricultural land in town should be protected but nothing has been done about it in the last ten years. He's concerned that nobody is thinking of the future of the local farms. He would like to see a zoning ordinance to protect the farms so they will not be developed.

K. Knowlton said there was a hayfield seminar presented by the Belknap County Conservation District and the UNH Cooperative Extension in August. They invited local farmers to listen to the program about developing a hay cooperative. The Commission is looking into what they can do to help the local farmers. He also said there are towns that have instituted agricultural commissions and wondered if that might be the direction they should take.

Mr. Conododemetraky said that's not what he is interested in. He would like the farm lands zoned as agricultural lands. He said that Sanbornton has a zoning ordinance for their agricultural lands.

K. Knowlton suggested to Mr. Conododemetraky that the most effective way to preserve agricultural land is to name the Belmont Conservation Commission as easement holders of a conservation easement that would preserve the land forever as agricultural land. Mr. Conododemetraky said that his children will decide what becomes of his property.

D. Morse said that not all the local farmers would want their lands zoned like that. At the town level it would be hard to institute this. It would be a major undertaking.

Mr. Conododemetraky said it should be up to the people to decide and thinks it is important to preserve certain lands for growing food. He wants the Conservation Commission to encourage the Planning Board to institute the zoning ordinance. Zoning was made by the community and they can change it.

K. Knowlton told Mr. Conedemetraky that he needs to get the people who own the farm lands

together and form a coalition. If he wants the zoning changed he will need to get them to come up with a collective proposition. Then it could be voted on.

BOARD'S ACTION-MINUTES:

MOTION: On a motion by D. Morse, seconded by C. Fairfield, the members voted to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2010 meeting. (4-0)

PUBLIC HEARING : The Conservation Commission intends to spend \$7500 from the Conservation Fund as a stewardship donation to 5 Rivers Conservation Trust as part of the conservation easement.

The Chairman opened the public hearing at 6:35 p.m. No members of the public were in attendance.

Since there were no objections or testimony from the public Chairman Knowlton closed the public hearing.

MOTION: On a motion by D. Morse , seconded by C. Fairfield, the members voted to expend \$7,500 from the Conservation Fund as a stewardship donation to 5 Rivers Conservation Trust as part of the conservation easement. (4-0)

AQUATIC RESOURCES MITIGATION GRANT:

R. Ball said he has been in contact with Mike Vecchiarelli who is the Program Director of The Student Conservation Association's New Hampshire corps(SCA NH corps). R. Ball has processed the application to hire SCA NH corps to work in the Tioga River Conservation Area next summer pulling the glossy buckthorn. The cost is \$19,032 for a 20 day hitch which is a crew of 6 total members (including 2 trained leaders) providing at least 960 man-hours. A lot of the students are trained in environmental science.

N. Coates asked what they will do with the cuttings. R. Ball said they will burn them. He said they will be pulling the glossy buckthorn with a leverage device which will get more of the root out.

Mr. Vecchiarelli is concerned that because of the monotony of the project it may be too boring for them and asked if there were be an additional project for them to do such as trail or bridge building. D. Naiva suggested having boardwalks built on the property. K. Knowlton thought a pole platform for an osprey nest would be good.

R. Ball said they will be looking for an area where the crew can camp during the work period.

JEFF MARDEN TOWN FOREST WHIP PROJECT:

R. Ball told the members that Tim Hayes has just gotten started on the project. By the next

meeting he hopes to report that the work is done and vegetation is growing. He has received the beaver barrier.

K. Knowlton mentioned the positive press that the town forest has gotten. There was an article in the newspaper by a reporter who enjoyed her visit there and also one from the high school's cross country coach who uses it for the team's practices and meets.

C. Fairfield noted that the letters have been sent out to the businesses in Belmont asking for donations to the Jeff Marden Scholarship fund.

2011 BUDGET:

R. Ball said that the Board of Selectmen met last week and have asked all the departments to cut their budgets for next year so he suggested they cut their professional services line from \$8,000 to \$5,000. He also suggested they cut their projects line from \$6,200 to \$5,000. Since they don't usually expend their entire budget the members agreed to the changes.

R. Ball suggested they buy the signs for the Andrew Sanborn Farm property and Pop's Woods property this year since they still have enough money left in their budget. The members agreed that they should have 2 signs at the Andrew Sanborn Farm property, one at each entrance.

VILLAGE REVITALIZATION:

K. Knowlton gave the members an update on the village revitalization committee. He said the committee had inquired into buying an 18 acre piece of land that is owned by Richard and Betty Persons. It is a railroad bed that goes along the Tioga River from the bridge at the end of Depot Street to South Road. The Persons are going to give it to the town and they only ask that the family name to be associated with it. The committee's idea is to use the property for a river walk. Christine Fogg is writing for a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant. It is the same program that was used to revitalize Sargent Park. They could use the Persons' gift as the town's match.

K. Knowlton said that the area around Penstock Park has been cleared out. He is looking for a donation from Lowe's or Home Depot for a bench. Ginger Wells-Kay has offered to do a landscape plan for the park.

STAFF REPORT:

SEPTEMBER EXPENDITURES:

R. Ball told the members that the expenditures for September were \$150 to Sean Chandler for the updated title for 5 Rivers out of their professional services line and \$122 for postage.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: On a motion by D. Morse, seconded by D. Naiva, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:30 p.m. (4-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Rollins

