

Francestown Conservation Commission

Monday Jan 6, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Members in attendance: Betsy Hardwick, Robin Haubrich, Don Shuffleton, Kelly Marshall, Pam Avery, Jim St. Jean

Members of the public in attendance: None.

Meeting called to order at 7:04pm

Minutes:

The commission is behind in approving quite a few meeting minutes from 2019. Scott has these notes and needs to pull them together for the next meeting.

Oct 7 2019 minutes were unanimously approved.

Notices:

Betsy announced 3 conservation items in town:

- Connard - deed restriction
- St. Jean - conservation easement
- Murphy - conservation easement

New Business:

Crotched Mt. Septic - a plan is underway to resolve the septic situation at the condos. The town holds 2 easements and needs to release both of them for the project to move forward. At a prior meeting, the commission offered their support to releasing the "slope easement" however there is also a parking easement. The town must also release 2 portions of this parking easement to allow for straightening of the roadway on East Road.

After discussion, a motion was made by Jim to support the release of 2 portions of the parking easement required for road straightening. The motion was seconded by Pam. The motion carried.

Betsy reported an incident regarding an unleashed dog in the town forest. The individual had a dog training permit from Fish and Game however it is unclear if this would apply in this situation, on a town forest. The reason for the leash policy is because loose dogs chasing wildlife can be very impactful and harmful to wildlife. Also, water quality can be negatively impacted by dog waste in more sensitive areas. The current rule is that all dogs must be on a leash, except active hunting dogs in the process of hunting in-season.

There was a discussion about the general need for signage, not only regarding keeping dogs on a leash but also to provide information to individuals prohibiting blocking of the road or parking illegally. A suggestion made to better educate the public about these issues by putting an article in the Francetown News. Betsy thought she had an older article we could re-publish, and would look into that. Also there was a question if the town had the needed equipment to print water-resistant signage on special paper, which she would inquire about.

Old Business:

- Prepare overdue minutes for voting at next meeting
- Connard deed completed
- Pam provided an update on the school engagement project. So far it is going well with weekly meetings and good student engagement.
- Fisher Hill inventory in process

Other Business

The school seedling project: It is time to order seedlings for this, and the Balsam Fir was chosen as the preferred option. Kelly will follow-up on availability.

Some of the ash trees behind the town sheds have been tagged for removal. It was unclear where the clippings would go, people felt they would be valuable to use in town.

There was a discussion about a large and growing phragmites infestation off Pleasant Pond Road. What role should the commission play in combating these threats? NRCS has grants for private landowners to use, but this money is not available to towns directly. The public generally does not know what to do in these situations, so there is an opportunity to educate. Kelly volunteered to collect additional information.

2020 Projects: There was some discussion about what 2020 projects we should be thinking about. Two were mentioned:

- Composting program for the town with rain barrels
- Continuing with the effort to improve and upgrade the website. Jim still has this on his to-do list and intends to keep it moving hopefully soon.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07pm

Respectfully submitted by Jim St. Jean