

Francestown Conservation Commission Minutes

August 31, 2020

Meeting was called to order by the Chair at 7:00 PM, in the downstairs meeting room at the Town Offices, 27 Main St.

Members present: Chair Betsy Hardwick, Scot Heath, Pam Avery, Robin Haubrich, Don Crooker, alternate Jim St.Jean and alternate Jeff Briggs, both alternates sitting for missing members Kelly Marshall & Don Shuffleton.. Members of the public present: Ben Haubrich and Larry Ames.

Chair Hardwick noted that the primary purpose of the meeting is to hold a Public Hearing on acquiring an Executory Interest in a Conservation Easement held by the Francestown Land Trust on 20+/- acres on the back portion of Map 3, Lot 55 located on Clarkville Road, and to expend \$3,000.00 from the Conservation Fund for this purpose. Proper notice has been posted, including a notice in the Monadnock Ledger Transcript and at two public locations. The Francestown Board of Selectmen approved this proposed acquisition at their August 10, 2020 meeting.

Hardwick recused herself as she is on the board of the Francestown Land Trust.

Vice Chair Don Crooker then opened the public hearing. He noted that the parcel serves to connect other conservation land as it is adjacent to the town-held Murray easement towards the west, to 50+ acres of town-owned land to the south, and also lies between other land protected by the Francestown Land Trust: that it contains highest ranked habitat per the NH Fish & Game's Wildlife Action Plan maps, contains 7 acres of floodplain forest and has 1080 feet of river frontage, and then asked for comments or questions from commission members; Scot Heath spoke about the high conservation value of the land. Don then asked for public comments or questions: Ben Haubrich spoke to the conservation values of the property, noting that there are lots of wetlands in the easement area, and that a house could be built on the property near the road. Hardwick mentioned the importance of protecting water quality of the Piscataquog River as it is a tributary to the Merrimack River, which was recently identified as being at risk. Don then closed the public hearing. Jim St.Jean made a motion to approve the acquisition of an Executory Interest in a Conservation Easement to be held by the Francestown Land Trust on 20+/- acres of Tax Map 3 Lot 55 and to expend \$3,000.00 from the Conservation Fund for it: motion was seconded by Scot Heath, a roll call vote was taken: St.Jean, Heath, Avery, Haubrich, Crooker, Briggs and Crooker in favor, no one opposed. The motion is approved.

Hardwick then rejoined the meeting;

Other Business:

- Fisher Hill Town Forest: parking lot is finished and invoice submitted for payment from the Conservation Fund for \$4,014.00 . Jim hopes to lay out the main trail soon, will let everyone know when he has done so, and will also write an article about the status of the project for the Francestown News.
- Wetlands violation follow up: Hardwick met with one of the owners at the property on Red House Road and reviewed the situation with him. The disturbed soil has since been mulched.
- Mountain Maintenance/East Road parking and septic situation: hikers have asked about where they can park to access town land; Hardwick will follow up with Selectmen.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45

Minutes by B. Hardwick