

Francestown Conservation Commission Minutes – Monday Nov 6, 2023

Betsy called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Members in attendance: Betsy Hardwick, Robin Haubrich, Jim St. Jean, Elizabeth Hunter Lavallee, Don Crooker, Dennis Rodier, Jeff Briggs, Anna Jo Dingman (alternate).

Public in attendance: Richard Eby, Taylor Hennas from Meridian Land Services

Notice and Announcements:

Jeff, Anna, and Elizabeth presented a summary of their attendance at the annual meeting of the Association of Conservation Commissions.

Minutes:

The September minutes were approved without objection, as amended to clarify certain details of the watershed committee update provided by Cathy Eby.

New Business:

Taylor Hennas presented the plan for a proposed development on Map 15, Lot 9, on Journey's End Road, with frontage on Haunted Lake. This plan will require a special exception because the driveway will be partially located within wetland setbacks. Building will also occur on steep slopes so it will need a sediment and control plan approved by the planning board and reviewed by con com.

The commission next reviewed the plan for a proposed subdivision of Map 3, Lot 104 located on Dodge Hill Road, being referred to as the Rainey subdivision. Elizabeth attended the planning board site walk and provided a report along with a copy of the subdivision plan. No issues were found with the plan.

Betsy provided an update from her discussion with the SNHRPC regarding assistance updating the Conservation Plan/Natural Resources Inventory (NRI). The commission discussed the potential scope of effort required and which maps were the highest priority to update. Working with the SNHRPC seems like a viable option if the scope is not too large. Betsy will share the expected scope with the SNHRPC and continue the process to obtain a proposal from them.

The next topic was a discussion about the fields at the Crotched Mountain Town Forest, which are becoming quite overgrown. The forest management plan for this forest states that it is our objective to keep the fields open by mowing them on a periodic basis. There is an opportunity to have this done as Jeff Tarr will be the immediate area working on another project, and we can save money by doing this mowing at the same time. Jeff Briggs made a motion to have Jeff mow as much of the field as possible, while he is in the area, at a rate of \$75 per hour. This was seconded by Elizabeth and the motion passed, with Betsy recusing, and nobody opposed.

The kiosk at the Crotched Mountain Town Forest parking is in need of repair. FLT is currently looking to have some work done on one of their kiosks as well. It was agreed we will see if FLT is able to locate a resource to do the work and try to piggy back on the same effort.

The commission next discussed the ongoing outreach and education efforts. In 2023 this was primarily driven by the “celebrating special places” series. Commission members discussed various ideas and alternatives for a new theme for 2024 including a potential focus on natural resources.

Next was a discussion about other active FLT conservation projects. One involves Map 8, Lot 62 (St. Jean) where FLT is applying for grants to support the purchase of a conservation easement. One of the grants being pursued is from LCHIP and FLT was asked by the LCHIP team if the conservation commission was financially supporting the project. Commission members expressed their interest in financially supporting the project (Jim recused himself from the discussion). A second FLT project is the “Woodbury Lot” which consists of 125 acres of managed forest land, and this project is also seeking to acquire a conservation easement. The commission also expressed their general interest to provide financial support to the Woodbury project. Betsy also provided a brief update on a 3rd FLT project, the Ames parcel, which is expected to be a property donation.

Betsy reminded everyone about the need to complete the annual property monitoring assignments by the end of the year.

Betsy asked commission members to review the draft Conservation Action Plan (CAP) and bring feedback to the next meeting.

Old Business:

Betsy provided an update on the Woodward Hill subdivision plan and that the erosion control and sediment plans were approved.

Elizabeth provided a brief update on recent watershed committee activities.

Other Business:

Betsy is in the process of submitting a 2024 budget to the select board.

There being no objections, Betsy adjourned the meeting at 8:43pm.

/Respectfully submitted by Jim St. Jean, Clerk/