

Tamworth Conservation Commission

Draft Minutes – August 10, 2015

Draft minutes to be reviewed and approved at a subsequent meeting

Call to Order – Nelson O'Bryan called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Commissioners present were Nelson O'Bryan, William Batchelder, Chele Miller, Rich Gerard, Shannon Maes and Ned Beecher. Commissioners absent: Bob Seston. Alternates present: Eric Dube and Charlie Townsend. Nelson appointed Eric to sit in Bob's empty seat.

Also present: John Roberts, Selectman; Bob Hardy, for Hemenway State Forest; Dennis Quinn, Gunnar Berg, and Declan O'Connell for Tamworth Wireless; Dave Bowles; John Mersfelder; Sam Martin.

Approval of Minutes for 07/13/2015 – Shannon pointed out that Dylan Harry's name was spelled wrong. Eric moved to accept with the correction to the spelling of Dylan Harry's name. Batch seconded. Motion carried with abstentions from Ned and John R.

Public Hearing for Fire Tower View Clearing

Rich reported that Bob Hardy has marked the trees to be cut for the view clearing. Rich has found a logger to do the work. A few more trees may be chosen as the work progresses.

Dennis Quinn (with support voiced by G. Berg and D. O'Connell) advised that the more trees that are taken out, the better the internet access will be for the customers of Tamworth Wireless. One tree can affect the bandwidth of numerous customers.

Dave Bowles stated concerns that some unmarked trees in the northwest quadrant will be tall enough to affect the view and internet access in just a few years.

John Mersfelder stated the importance of how the public perceived this project. He asked how long the clearing would last before it would need to be done again. Bob Hardy estimated that it would be good for eight to ten years and he restated that, as the cutting progressed, he would reassess the lines of sight and possibly mark some more trees.

Dennis Quinn and Dave Bowles each requested to be notified when Bob has scheduled a time to reassess the (in progress) view clearing. It was agreed to do this.

Dave Bowles added that there are also fire safety issues pertaining to the antenna and the fact that the tower is/can be useful for its original intended purpose.

Logging methods were discussed. Rich explained that there were so few trees that had marketable saw logs that the logger did not intend to use a skidder but would haul the logs out using less intrusive means, thereby minimizing the possibility of erosion. The presence of the power cable serving the tower was acknowledged and the loggers will avoid disturbing it. Agreed that the trails around the tower should be closed while the loggers are working. Bob has the signs available and Rich will put them up and take them down as needed. Dennis Quinn offered labor support courtesy of Tamworth Wireless.

There being no other comments offered, Nelson closed the public hearing.

Snowmobile Trails in Big Pines Natural Area – John Mersfelder stated that he noticed that a brochure/map distributed by the Ossiipee Valley Snowmobile Club (OVSC) stated that the trail system accesses Big Pines Natural Area. He was not aware of any trails in the area that are open to snowmobile traffic. Bob Hardy pointed out that the Blake Orchard Road, which is used by OVSC under agreement with the State, is within the northern arm of the Big Pines Natural Area for a few hundred feet. Bob also confirmed that the tower access road from the tower to the turnout at the boy scout cabin is not in the OVSC agreement.

Announcements

NH-DES: Received one acknowledgement of completed forestry notification form for tax map/lot 415/15.

Treasurer's Report/Financial – Bob Seston being absent, Nelson reported that, to date, TCC has spent 11% of the annual budget but the fire tower projects are the bulk of the budget and money will be expended soon.

Selectmen – John Roberts explained that there was a mix-up in reassigning Selectmen's representative duties for 2015 but he is and will be the Selectmen's representative for TCC.

Conservation Easements

Bearcamp Valley Farm – Eastern Field: Bob Floyd and LRCT intend to close on the sale of the property to LRCT on or before September 2nd (August 28th is preferred, at least by Ned). Based on the original plan of 2012, a Memorandum of Understanding between Floyd, LRCT and TCC is part of this final action in conserving Bearcamp Valley Farm. Ned passed out a draft of the MOU. The MOU includes PILT payments by LRCT to the Town, continuation of use of the property by Floyd for the purpose of agriculture, a ten year transition period to get all all agricultural practices into compliance with the conservation easement, and guidelines for any future sale by LRCT for the purpose of rejoining the original parcels of Bearcamp Valley Farm for the purposes of agriculture.

Shannon moved to endorse the MOU. Eric seconded, motion carried.

Kennett Osgood Road Parcel – Nelson reported that the Conservation Lands Review Committee and SPNHF are in the process of investigating conservation options on this property but it is in the very early stages.

Public Education and Outreach

250th Celebration Ideas: Nelson compiled a list of ideas collected over the past few months and passed them out. One more idea was added: recognition of the native American history of the area. Thad Berrier is a local source concerning hornfels. Dick Boisvert, NH State Archaeologist, is another possible source.

Easement Monitoring – Chele passed out a list of easement assignments. Please check and let her know of any corrections/changes needed. Also, in an effort to better know the easements, Chele and Eric would like to be invited when monitors do their site walks.

Managed Lands and Trails

Fire Tower Painting – Dylan Harry has begun work on painting the tower. He will probably be done before the view clearing starts.

Trail Maintenance – Let Nelson know of any trail maintenance issues you come across.

Adjourn – There being no other business brought before the Commission, Batch moved, Ned seconded, meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by Chris Conrod, TCC Administrative Assistant.