

Warner Conservation Commission

Minutes of Meeting
February 1, 2017 at 7:00 PM

Attending: Nancy Martin, Doug Allen, Phil Stockwell, Alice Chamberlin, Scott Warren, and Russ St.Pierre (recording).

Also present: numerous members of the Bound Tree ATV Club

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of January 4, 2017 were approved with a few minor corrections.

Land Protection Updates:

Collins Parcel – nothing new to report.

Willow Brook/Bartlett Loop – The Board of Selectmen received a letter from Five Rivers Conservation Trust expressing interest in accepting the conservation easement on the Warren's property. Their acceptance is contingent on the placement of a conservation easement on the Town-owned parcel.

State-owned Parcel (Map 7, Lot 1) – An update of issues related to this parcel is as follows:

Appraisal: The Department hasn't responded to the Town's letter because they have asked for a reappraisal of the property. They are not certain if the land-locked nature of the property was fully taken into account in the original appraisal. The new appraisal should be completed in "a few weeks." At that time they will respond to the Selectmen's letter. By law the Department is required to sell surplus property at fair market value.

Administrative Fee: If an agreement is reached, there will be a meeting conducted by the long range capital planning and utilization committee to approve the sale. The Town will be given notice of this meeting, and may ask the committee to waive the administrative fee. The Department will recommend against waiving the fee.

Archaeological Study: An archaeological study of the property will only be required if the Town proposes construction or other disruptive activities to the property. This is a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requirement. They have a say because they originally contributed to the purchase of the property for the Interstate System,

Fence: The request to repair the fence is also a FHWA request. In most cases it would probably entail straightening out the existing fence posts. It could also require replacing sections of the woven wire fencing that have been destroyed. These fence repair activities are not the type of activities that would require a Phase I archaeological study.

Mt. Kearsarge Indian Museum – Nancy received a call from the museum's board asking to delay an anticipated presentation. Council members would like to walk the parcel to ascertain its conservation value.

Update on ATV Activity in the Mink Hills

Nancy noted that discussion of ATV use in the Mink Hills had been on last night's Selectmen's meeting agenda, but was rescheduled at her request. The discussion was requested to ask the Selectmen to convene another meeting with a broader audience to discuss the issues from all perspectives including the ATV users, land owners, emergency services, police and natural resource protection. It was emphasized that it was not the Commission's intention to prohibit ATV use on Class VI roads, but to seek a broader discussion of the issues that arise from ATV and other vehicle use in these areas.

Members of the Bound Tree ATV Club noted that they have never received any complaints from land owners along the roads that they use. They also noted that they perform trail maintenance and have an annual clean-up day to remove trash. It was suggested that damage to private property is most likely from other types of vehicles such as jeeps and trucks that can use the Class VI roads without requiring permission from the Town, and from people using the roads who don't respect the resources or the opportunity to use them.

A tentative meeting to discuss the issues is scheduled for March 23th. It was suggested that the meeting would be most effective if a facilitator was appointed to help get through the issues.

Warner Hiking Trails

Doug reported that he talked with Warner Parks and Recreation about improving existing trails to increase their use. He will attend their next meeting.

Warner River Nomination:

Nancy reported the nomination committee is collecting letters in support of the proposal.

Warner Solar Array

A proposed solar array by the transfer station will again be before the voters in March. The proponents are asking for a letter of support from the Conservation Commission. There will be a public information meeting next Tuesday. It was suggested that someone from the village water precinct could discuss how that array has operated.

Rails to Trails

Tim Blagdon has asked the Conservation Commission for a letter in support of the rails-to-trails project. The Commission discussed potential impacts to riparian habitats along the proposed route, and how to get assurances that these sensitive areas would be protected.

Wetland Issues:

Russ reported there was one forestry notification submitted during the month of January and that DES determined the notification was complete.

Planning Board

Nancy reported that she contacted Darrel Parker regarding the Master Plan update and asked that the Commission be involved in the process, where appropriate.

New Business

Nancy noted there was an upcoming training session available for easement monitoring

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25.

The next meeting will be on March 1, 2017 at 7:00 PM.