



Town of Warner, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission
Wednesday, November 1, 2023

MINUTES
Warner Town Hall 7:00 pm
In Person Meeting
Zoom Access

Warner Conservation Commission (WCC) members present: Alice Chamberlin, Ken Cogswell, Michael Amaral, Susi von Oettingen, Jackie Germaine (Alternate), Scott Warren (Alternate), Phil Stockwell (Alternate), and Nancy Martin, Chair. Members of the public present: Tim Blagden, David Carroll.

Meeting began at 7:00 pm.

1. Communications – Nancy Martin, Chair –

- a. Noted that the annual meeting of the NH Association of Conservation Commissions will convene Saturday, November 3 at 9:30 am. Nancy will be attending and has the agenda. David Carroll will be the keynote speaker at the meeting.
- b. Nancy Martin received a note from Jody Sloane (WCC) that she had received a message from David Carroll regarding a clarification on the WCC's position on the rail trail.

Discussion regarding any WCC position on the rail trail follows. Question from Michael Amaral, is there a historical WCC position? Past letter supported the concept of a rail trail but did not specifically state a position on any particular segment at this time. Need clarification on the process, every section of the trail needs a permit and gets reviewed by NH Fish and Game and/or New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau. These agencies provide recommendations and/or mitigation (under the National Environmental Policy Act). Need more information about the entire rail trail, need documentation to review and understand the current status of the rail trail. If the WCC takes a formal position, will need to do so at a public hearing. The WCC intends to do a deeper investigation regarding all aspects of the rail trail. Alice Chamberlin requested that Tim share what is in the record regarding past position of the WCC. Recommends that the rail trail is reviewed as a whole and not reviewed as segments. Is incumbent upon the applicant and state to provide remedial approaches to avoid/reduce impacts to natural resources. Difficult to specify the exact location of the proposed rail trail due to the need to obtain easements, there is a general corridor that has been identified. Review the process and project by Tim Blagden. Alice Chamberlin requested more information on protective measures that would be in place and/or proposed. Suggests that the rail trail proponents should take the lead in identifying conservation measures to avoid/minimize impacts to rare natural resources.

David Carroll has stated his position regarding impacts from the rail trail to declining turtles globally. He is concerned about the resident turtles within the proposed rail trail corridor specifically to turtles. Believes that the increased human presence and their pets (dogs) will

have on turtles. Questions if this is a town “need” or “want”. Noted research on the impacts of rail trails along waterways.

Next steps – what should the WCC do within the next month and thereafter. Nancy Martin offered to draft a letter to invite state agencies who have reviewed the project to a meeting. Beforehand the WCC should review the comments provided by the state agencies. Letters regarding the existing segments are available. Look at the DES permits (past and present). Also review Army Corps of Engineers permits. Tim Blagden will provide historical information. There are no ongoing projects ready for permit review. Once the project starts and a consultant is hired to then reviews for environmental are initiated. Tim Blagden offered to take the WCC through the entire general corridor although some segments are not yet specified. Recommend a working session with NH Fish and Game Josh Megyesy and Tim Blagden to review the environmental impacts of the proposed rail trail with the WCC.
Joshua.Megyesy@wildlife.nh.gov.

2. Conservation Easement Amendment – The WCC has a few questions that need to be answered, including what the definition of a “cabin” is and do all conditions under Res. Rights apply to the property that would be added. Request that Brian clarify the section of Res. Rights. Will hold off on a decision regarding the funding request.
3. Approve Minutes- October 4, 2023 – Edit change Craig Fournier to Craig Tufts under Number 6. The minutes were approved with the one edit.
4. Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) – Update from Craig Tufts (NH Central Planning Commission), sent to all members of the WCC. Recommendation that we need to weed out higher ranked properties that are small and most likely not as valuable as some that ranked lower. Will request that one more meeting with Craig Tufts with the working subcommittee.
5. Mink Hills Recreational Study Committee- Presentation by Sarah Allen of the Committee to the Warner Board of Selectmen (BOS). Outcome is that the Mink Hills Recreational Study Committee has been disbanded. The BOS have been asked to develop a Stewardship Committee. First action would be to review the Mud Season signs for revision and updating and monitor the Mink Hills. Outcome of the Committee: in-depth collection of data, 10 Recommendations to the BOS. The Final Report is on the Town’s website.
6. Mountain Bike Trail on Mt Kearsarge – Update on the status of the proposed Mountain Bike Trail. Central New Hampshire New England Mountain Biking Association. Nothing has been done other than a contract to a consultant. No trail flagging until the leaves are off the trees. Tim Blagden provided the information regarding the status. Contacts for the proposed project are Matt Bowser with Central NH and Arlon Chaffee.
7. Collins Property Update – Nancy Martin asked the temporary Town Administrator if there was an update on the easement status. No response at this time.
8. Agricultural Committee-Update – Michael Amaral reported no update for the WCC.

9. Forestry-Wetlands Permits – Ken Cogswell – 5 intents to cut. One intent involving brush cutting on Loud Lane. The other Intent to Cut requests vary from 7 to 50 acres. Ken Cogswell will do a field check on the lots proposed for cutting near Pleasant Pond.
10. Meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm.