Franconia Conservation Committee March 24, 2016

Attending: Kim, Mary, Ginny, Red, and Kathy

Northern Pass, Ginny reporting and expanding on the email note sent previously

On 3/18 SEC met and grouped sub parts of towns together to simplify procedure. Each intervener can file individual testimonies about specific concerns noted. Future pleading will need to be done by one spokesperson for the entire group. Franconia is grouped with Sugar Hill, Easton, Woodstock, and Plymouth. Each town will have underground passage. We should not disagree with this pairing except to perhaps ask to have Plymouth removed from the group as their selectmen do not seem to have any qualms about Northern Pass going right through the town. This depends on what the Franconia select board chooses to do. FCC prefer to with Sugar Hill and Easton only. There remains much effort needed and mitigation in the future.

Concerns about wetlands along the planned Northern Pass route: Ginny asked that committee member be alert about any vernal pool or other wetland special area noted along the route. She mentioned contacting Elise Lawson, environmental consultant, to map the route line. She has had informal discussions with Cheryl in Bethlehem. They will have the overhead lines rather than underground.

Red asked Ginny if she was aware, at any of the meetings, of a discussion of the Northern Pass/ Hydro Quebec considering going down the rte 91 corridor in Vermont? She replied that Eversource wants the line to be totally in NH.

Selectman, John LaChappelle will return as the Select board representative to our committee.

Fox Hill Park report: Kim noted that she and Eric have replaced and reestablished some boundary pins on the NE corner of the property. The Society for Protection of NH Forests is expected to reimburse Eric for his surveying work. The parking area has started to grow in and a suggestion is made to cut back some of the trees to open up the parking area. Kim made a suggestion to consider improving the Gale River Trail from the kiosk along the river, perhaps using a grant, to improve the pass and thereby the access for strollers and handicap vehicles. The local Adaptive Program would be a partner in this endeavor and helpful in obtaining grant monies.

Lawrence Property access ideas: There are existing trails/access from the back side of the property on Balancing Rock and Old County Road. Property owners would need to be contacted for permission. Sawmill Lane access: Atty Bill Oliver will be at the next meeting to give info on a parking easement at this location. Kim, Red, and Ginny, walked across 2 brooks at the Sawmill Lane crossing on March 28 to check the feasibility of constructing a foot bridge in this area. Red will do more research on this area and others in May. Parking along rte 18 would need to be discussed with the state. Perhaps there could be access through the town forest area…a right of way would need to be researched. An overview access plan needs to be developed before the committee approaches landowners. Options for parking and funding for developing a parking areas will be discussed at later dates.

Crocker Property: it was discussed that committee members need to walk this property before deciding of we choose to be an easement holder for ACT.

A suggestion was made to check out the easement area we hold behind and to the left of the Franconia Airport to see if all is in compliance with the easement conditions.

The next meeting of the FCC will be on Thursday, March 31st at 4:00 in the conference room at Lafayette Regional School.

Future FCC meeting will be held on the last Thursday of each month unless otherwise noted.