Franconia Conservation Commission (FCC)

Meeting: Dec 3, 2019, 3 pm

Members present: Jill Brewer, Mary Grote, Ginny Jeffryes, Chris Nicodemus, Red McCarthy, Mark Ober.

Old minutes:

Jill moves to accept 6/18/19 minutes. Chris seconds. Unanimously approved.

Chris moves to accept 10/22/19 minutes. Mark seconds. Unanimously approved.

Save Forest Lake and associated groups’ 10/20/19 request for a letter expressing opposition to a proposed Casella landfill abutting Forest Lake State Park: Discussion: The proposal is too early and without adequate information available to inform the discussion. Environmental contamination of Ammonoosuc and Forest Lake are serious risks. But we aren’t an abutting town, so it isn’t clear whether we should be commenting as a Commission. It’s true that the town took an official position in 2012 against Northern Pass, before the amended proposal which took the route through Franconia, but that was a vote at a Town Meeting. At today’s discussion, we decided to defer a decision on the support request to when the proposal appears to be actually moving forward. Jill will send them an email reply telling them to keep us informed.

Local conservation projects:

a) Andy Hyde’s approximately 60 acres which abuts Lawrence Family Forest, the Town Forest, Lovett’s Field, and County Line Road - has multiple trails within it which are integral to the Franconia Trail system. Included are Pebble Beach Trail, part of Ian’s Trail, to name a couple. Andy has permitted these trails for years. But if/when he eventually decides to sell the land, the trail system would be at risk. Chris spoke to him in November, and he is willing to consider proposals about how to conserve those trails, possibly as easements, or other options. He asked Chris to discuss potential options with Chrissy Valar Breen, who hasn’t responded to Chris’s subsequent letter. We’re interested in preserving these important trail corridors. Red will explore how to reach out to her again.

b) Van Pelt’s 10 acres for sale near the corner of Wells Road: No new information since last meeting about whether the abutters are moving forward with buying it. We voted last meeting to write letter to ACT supporting conserving that, assuming ACT wants a letter at this point. Ginny will talk to Rebecca and draft the letter, if Rebecca requests it now.

c) That piece abuts some of Mary’s Wells Road land. The Grotes recently did preliminary work toward the process of putting some of their Wells Road property into conservation.

Chris brings up that preserving trail corridors is a conservation strategy, and wonders if the Current Use conservation land fund can be used for purchasing trail easements. Jill will check on this, and also how much money is in that fund.

We will look for a time for a few of us to walk our current easement holding in January.

Next meeting: Tues January 21st 3 pm.

Minutes by Ginny Jeffryes.