

Franconia Conservation Commission (FCC) - draft

Meeting: Mar 5, 2024, 3 pm at Town Hall.

Members present: Chris Nicodemus (Chair), Ginny Jeffryes, Jill Brewer, Julie Weisman, Art Daily.

Guests: Joseph Daily

Minutes: Jill moves to approve Feb 6, 2024 minutes as written. Art seconds. Unanimously approved.

Wetlands permit by Notification for a driveway and 2 culverts:

Received copy today of application for driveway on Franconia Mountains Road property at a planned house site, prepared by Presby Construction. [Map 16-30, owners A. Christopher and M. Walker]: Detailed site map and application reviewed today by FCC. Much of the 3 acre site is wetlands, except for the specific home footprint and septic footprint. The application details plan of installation of driveway with two 15 inch x 15 feet culverts underlying it, driveway crossing "palustrine forested wetland". Looks like at least 80 to 100 linear feet of driveway will run through the wetlands per the map. Chris notes that Red isn't here to help us evaluate. Chris reports that in fact Red has resigned due to his lack of future availability for meetings. We only have a few more days to contact DES if we have concerns, but we haven't walked it. Discussion that we don't have any authority other than to write letter to DES wetlands to ask them to look closely at it if we have concerns, and we would have to vote today to do that. Art points out importance of walking it to verify any wetlands concerns. After discussion, members present decided we are neutral about this, so we will not write to DES about the permit.

PSU water resource project update:

Chris, Linda Hansen, and Charlie Wolcott met with the 3 PSU project students, and took them on a tour of the valley. They're engaged, and will be looking at all the issues that the tri-town CCs defined of concern. End goal is to add to and update the previous PSU Story Map. The eventual issue will be that we need someone on our end with GIS skills who can update and maintain the Story Map. Chris hopes that Michelle can find time to learn GIS and take this on, since she had expressed interest in learning GIS, and he will reach out to her. The students want to present their Story Map in a tri-town meeting in early May, with better notice, publicity, and attendance than last year's.

Ginny asks whether they are planning to include surface waters, since the PSU proposal mentions that they won't include because of some USGS errors in Meadow Brook mapping. Chris says they will talk about all of the waters at some level but doesn't know specifics. He will give them feedback that surface waters are important to us. Ginny asks if they will be looking at the Gale tributary that runs by the Casella landfill. Chris says yes; they drove by and looked at it on the tour, and that everything on the east side of Casella goes into a long wetland that's part of the Beaver Brook that flows into the Gale. And the other sides flow into the Ammonoosuc. So both towns are involved.

Ginny mentions that since her last year's invitation to local conservation commissions to attend her Conservation Commission June wildflower walk, she has been getting cc's of Dalton CC chair Jon Swan's emails about his detailed analyses of the PFAS testings and water quality problems at the Casella test wells that are on the landfill property. She wonders if PSU group might find this info useful. Chris says that if it's publically available data, it's useful, though clearly the PSU students don't want to get involved in political or legal battles. Chris thinks it's relevant to the tri-towns but students can use their judgement. Julie thinks we don't want to expand the PSU students' project beyond their scope. Ginny wonders if she should ask him to present to FCC – not to the student project – the PFAS and other contaminant findings he's found in his research of the test wells on the Gale River watershed drainage side of the landfill. General discussion results in consensus to invite Jon Swan to talk with us about his data work on PFAS and contaminants in Casella test wells. Further discussion about long-term

consequences of landfill locations, either capped or active. Ginny will let Jon Swan know that when he has time, we would like him to meet with us.

Lawrence Forest new trail proposal:

Chris got an email he forwarded to us from NEMBA/Northern Forest Center saying they need to do a detailed wetlands delineation as their next step. Bill Whelan thinks he can visit in April to discuss with us. Ginny says that we still need to vote to approve a trail, because we didn't yet. Chris says we're waiting to have a trail proposal, and we don't have one. Chris says he went there recently and there are no flags to say where the trail is, but there is a GPS course that defines the general course. Within that band they need a wetlands delineation in the vernal season; and to send Elise back in we need to know where exactly the planned trail is. Chris thinks we can table the issue for another month.

Process for Natural Resource Inventory landowner outreach:

Chris created a landowner table of potential stream and wetland areas from the 2 tax maps involving Meadow Brook as a start; mailing addresses available on tax cards. He created a cover letter which he tweaked with Elise, along with NRI access permission slip. We'll reach out to owners of wetland areas she may want to visit. She requires written permission. Ginny says to prevent disappointment, letter should say something like, "It is possible she may want to access..." since she doesn't have time to visit this long property list. Art says letter needs to be succinct; Julie agrees. Chris requests that we choose people we know to follow up: contacts set up today. Julie says we'll get better return permission via email. Chris will send to us edited letter, and town office is setting up an email address for FCC that will be [conservation@franconianh.org](mailto:conservation@franconianh.org). Chris says Elise's site visits will be May and June.

Annual monitoring of McKenzie easement: Discussion – will plan for next week's cold snap, date TBD.

Co-sponsored conservation talk: April 4 – Easton Town Hall – WMNF by Dave Govatski.

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 2, 2024, 3 pm.

Minutes by Ginny Jeffries