

Conservation Commission Minutes

1/10/23

Meeting convened at 6:35 pm.

Present: Chris Fithian, Steve Frackleton, Colleen Ryan, Craig Billie

The September meeting was canceled due to conflict with the election and several members being unavailable.

New business:

1. The Commission received copies of several permit applications approved by NH DES:
 - a. Emergency authorization to stabilize 70 feet of bank stabilization on the Ellis River at 30 Rivers Bend Rd. The Commission plans to do a visual inspection from the road to ensure that the work was completed, as the permit expired on Dec. 30.
 - b. Culvert replacement on the Christmas Warehouse property. The work involves replacement of an existing culvert with minimal permanent impacts to the wetlands.
2. The Commission received a copy of a request for more information from DES on a dredge and fill application for 544 NH Rte 16.
3. NH DES is requesting any surface water quality data that has been collected in the state. The Commission was previously involved in water quality monitoring on the Saco. The Chair contacted DES to request information on volunteer monitoring and did not receive a reply. Colleen will contact the Volunteer River Assessment Program again to see if anyone is currently monitoring the Saco. Other organizations that might be involved in monitoring for the Saco include the Saco Headwaters Alliance or Saco Swift Advisory Committee. Colleen will contact them to see if they are currently doing any monitoring.
4. The Commission discussed the possibility of requesting a warrant article at the next town meeting, either 1) for a small annual funding allotment for the conservation fund, or 2) to allow any unused funds to roll over into the conservation fund at the end of the fiscal year. There was discussion of whether we would need to have a current planned use for the funds, or whether we should try to build a fund to be available as conservation opportunities arise (as other towns do). Chris will check with the NH Assoc. of Conservation Commissions for possible language or strategies for requesting funding. Other members will consider what approach to take with this question.
5. The Commission agreed that we need better communication with the community. Steve proposed reaching out to the author of the Bartlett Town Column in the Conway Daily Sun, Amy Deshais, to communicate what the commission is doing, especially volunteer opportunities.
6. Chris' and Colleen's terms as members of the Commission expired in 2022. Chris will check with the select board about the procedure to be reappointed.

Old business

7. Plans for more easement monitoring will be discussed in the spring.

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 pm.

Next month's meeting will be at 6:00 on Monday, February 13.