

Westmoreland Conservation Commission  
Jun 7, 2018 meeting minutes (unapproved minutes)

Meeting called to order at 8:30 AM

Present: Marshall Patmos, April Ferguson, Mary Bradley, John Lukin, Jim Ranson, Dick Schmidt,

Guests: Chris Coates, County Administrator, Peter Graves, County Commissioner, Steve Horton, Construction Consultant, Kathy Urffer, Connecticut River Conservancy River Steward, Samantha Loch, Intern, Connecticut River Conservancy.

Kathy Urffer and Samantha Loch of the Connecticut River Conservancy, formerly known as the Connecticut River Watershed Council joined us to discuss plans to survey/initiate/develop/improve plans for recreational opportunities along the Connecticut River. This is in response to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Great River Hydro relicensing process involving the dams in Vernon and Bellows Falls. The current license expires on April 30, 2019.

The Conservancy is interested in the 7000 feet of woodland and river trail system developed and maintained by UNH Cooperative Extension, volunteers and county employees. This includes a 2100 foot hardpacked limited mobility trail along the river. The trails haven't been maintained for a number of years and need work to rejuvenate them. There is also interest in a canoe/kayak boat launch on the river. Chris Coates pointed out that the County is interested improving public recreational opportunities on County land including a possible limited access boat ramp. They have retained the services of Lewis Shelley of Walpole to prepare a plan for trail improvement work. The Commission endorses the concepts and would be able to provide input on behalf of the town where interests have been expressed. Many of the original participants can probably assist in any current plans. Kathy Urffer and Samantha Loch were encouraged by the discussion and will be following up with the Commission and the County.

After meeting with the River Conservancy, the Commission members meet with Chris Coates, Peter Graves and Steve Horton to discuss the disposal of the debris from the demolition of the county jail. According to the NH Dept of Environmental Services, the jail demolition debris is regulated asbestos waste, disposal of which is subject to a number of State and Federal guidelines. While some sorting was done, the company contracted to dispose of the material was hauling it to fill a washed out ravine in a field adjacent to the river on County property. Contrary to State regulations the non-permitted dumping was ceased in late 2017 with cleanup and remediation required by the State for Spring 2018. The County applied for and received a waiver from the NH Dept of Environmental Services Waste Management Division on May 23, 2018 to allow it to construct and maintain an asbestos waste landfill on County property. The waiver provided for construction of a landfill at the site of the former "Daycare House", following its' demolition, located south off the driveway to Maplewood Nursing Home.

Chris Coates reviewed how the County had complied with the waiver (a copy of which is available at the town office) and contracted with construction consultant Steve Horton to plan and oversee the work and Catamount Environmental of Wilmington, Vt. to monitor and ensure proper disposal and safety procedures during the process. As far as he knew, proper procedures were followed as provided for in the waiver and an amended

4/16/2018 landfill plan prepared by Steve Horton Consulting Services. He was confident in the credentialed managers of the work process and felt there were no problems.

The Conservation Commission had some concerns in regard to a number of issues including the notification of those working in and visiting the area during the storage and then movement of the asbestos waste to the landfill site. With the discovery of mastic asbestos and asbestos containing vermiculite during the jail demolition process, precautions should have been taken to let people know of possible hazards, however slight. Although there was a hazardous tape around the base of the supposed most hazardous small pile stored at the jail site, perhaps it should have been covered and larger signage used. Notification should have included workers at Maplewood (a number of them walk by the site every day), those who frequent the demolition site and the general public. The waiver states that “sole purpose of disposing of the jail demolition debris, all of which is regulated asbestos waste”. The work is therefore subject to Env-Sw 901 of the NH Code of Administrative Rules and 40CFR, Chapter 61 of the Code of Federal Regulations. While airborne asbestos exposure might be slight, it is a very dangerous material and symptoms of health problems can sometimes take decades to show up. Apparently the County is responsible any concerns caused by the material (including that moved offsite) for thirty years.

Steve Horton assured us that all precautions had been taken and that provisions of the NH and Federal asbestos waste disposal guidelines were followed. Contrary to his comments, observations by some residents including some our members noted that the moving of material in uncovered trucks, lack of signage at work site until after the work had started, lack of hazardous protective gear on those moving and trucking the material. Apparently the individual from Catamount Environmental is charged with being on site at all times to supervise the work. We reported that a number of times there was nobody there from Catamount during the work. That doesn't mean absences weren't temporary but was still cause for concern. Steve handed out a copy of his 4/16/2018 amended demolition plan (copy available at the town office) and reported that air quality testing is done at the sites and records are kept. He said they haven't found any major concerns so far. We assumed that the air quality records have been saved. Chris Coates reported that some of the asbestos waste was shipped to a facility in Albany, NY while some of the clean demolition material has been trucked to Walpole to be crushed and reused in road work.

Another concern of the Commission is the location of the landfill even though it was approved by the State. It is located on the edge of a significant slope. If the pressure from the tremendous weight upslope is said to have caused movement of the original “Day Care” house, it seems that over time the landfill might also be pressured downhill. Apparently the wall holding some of the slope has had to be repaired in the past due to pressure and water drainage. Monitoring the site as required by the guidelines will hopefully abate any problems.

A takeaway from the meeting might be that it's important to supervise the supervisors to assure checks and balances in any project, particularly one of this magnitude. The meeting was of value to the Commission and to County representatives and provided valuable insight to both parties.

Following the meeting concerning the asbestos landfill, the Commission attended to regular business.

The minutes of the May 3, 2018 meeting were approved as submitted.

John Lukin reported that upon examination of a site on Partridge Brook Road there was not a problem with cutting of vegetation along the brook as reported in a complaint to the Commission.

The NH Association of Conservation Commissions has requested information on class VI and scenic roads in town. Marshall will report to them that there is no building on Class VI roads and our only "scenic road" is Paine Road.

The Zoning Board of Adjustment has requested our input concerning wetland adjacent to a proposed two-car garage construction (to replace a structure already there) on the Derjue property on River Road. Those familiar with the site reported that there are no concerns. Marshall will visit the site to confirm and report back to the planning board.

Marshall reported that the May 5 roadside cleanup day sponsored by the Commission and spearheaded by the Lions Club was a success as usual with 50 participants collecting 101 bags of "stuff" over about 20 miles of road. Marshall will report the information to "Litter-Free NH " in Epsom.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:45am.

The next meeting is scheduled for 8:30 am on Thursday, July 5, 2018 at the town hall.

Submitted by Marshall Patmos