

Westmoreland Conservation Commission Meeting  
April 7, 2022 (unapproved minutes)

Present: Marshall Patmos (Chair), April Ferguson, Jeanette Hubert, Jean Rudolf, Perry Sawyer, Dick Schmidt, Jon Lounsbury, Douglas Oatley, Mike Kowalczyk (guest), Jason Bafundi (guest), John Bafundi (guest), Andy Mackey (guest)

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM.

April moved to approve our March meeting minutes, seconded by Perry, and approved by all.

Mike Kowalczyk, director of Monadnock Rail Trail committee gave an excellent and informative slide show presentation about the Monadnock Rail Trail Collaborative, a 501c(3) organization. Work is in progress on the Fort Hill, Ashuelot and Cheshire Trails, and some connecting trails . Planned work includes providing a ground stone base, grading, clearing, a bridge over Rt. 101 by the stone bridge, acquiring grants, washout repair, and a sign designed for state-wide rail trail use. He encouraged anyone interested in the trail should contact him and be put on the mailing list. The Conservation Commission has contacted the 54 Westmoreland landowners that own land along the trail and have generated some interest. The trail will provide economic benefits to nearby businesses, environmental benefits, and recreational/health benefits for the public. Funding is expected from grants, towns and possibly area businesses.

Regarding the roadside cleanup, Jon Lounsbury and Andy Mackey described preparation and plans for the April 23 event The Commission through the town provides bags and safety vests. The Westmoreland School will be the gathering point with refreshments, materials, maps and sign-up sheets available. The cleanup will be announced to the public using the town website, fliers, emails, and signs to provide details and attract volunteers.

Much of the meeting addressed concerns for the proposed firehouse. The Commission continues to have concerns of contaminants from vehicle wash off and fire-fighting gear. It is apparently planned to get an "extractor" to wash clothes, but the disposal method of wash water has not been identified. Jason and John Bafundi, neighbors immediately downhill from the facility, voiced their concerns. As the Commission has discussed in the past, Jason noted that washing performed inside and outside the building should discharge water to containment or holding tanks and then pumped out by licensed disposal companies and hauled off site. There are apparently several engineering options prepared by firehouse designers that could help alleviate our concerns regarding wetland, drainage and pollutants.

Jason seems quite knowledgeable about the engineering and possible solutions to our concerns. We will invite him back for additional input at a future meeting.

The Commission questions if before work proceeds, a Federal Environmental Impact Statement might be needed to ensure that an officially declared hazardous waste site is not created by improper disposal of the contaminated material. The Impact Statement is apparently quite an involved process. Declaration of a hazardous waste site is long term, involves official inspections and possible lawsuits from downstream/downhill landowners. Not sure the town wants to take any chances.

The Commission should receive official applications and approvals for the wetland/drainage work as planned. We will be contacting the appropriate individuals at the NH Department of Environmental Services for assistance as we have in the past.

Due to today's time restraints for some of the members, April moved to have another meeting soon to further discuss these issues, seconded by Jeanette, all voted in the affirmative.

We discussed the information that Marshall had distributed to members concerning a possible grant through Southwest Region Planning Commission. The grant proposal presented to the Planning Board, would review town ordinances in relation to NHRSA's, address town needs, with encouraged affordable housing as part of the grant. Marshall, Jean, and April attended the Planning board meeting where this was presented. There will apparently be a group of representatives of the various boards including the Selectboard to discuss applying for the grant. The Commission members present at today's meeting unanimously voted that applying for the grant at this time is not appropriate.

At 11:02 AM April moved to adjourn, seconded by Jeanette, all in favor.

The next monthly WCC meeting will be held at 8:30 AM on Thursday, May 5, 2022, at Town Hall.

Submitted by Richard Schmidt