

Westmoreland Conservation Commission

January 2, 2020 minutes

Present: Marshall Patmos, April Ferguson, Mary Bradley, Jeanette Hubert, Jim Ranson, Perry Sawyer, Jean Rudolph, guest Frank Hunter.

Meeting called to order at 8:30 am

The minutes for the November and December meetings were approved as submitted.

We reviewed the status of our Conservation fund which was adopted in 2002. The fund receives 50% of the current-use penalties and was set up to help fund permanent land conservation in town. The balance is currently \$52,738. It was suggested that perhaps we should ask for an increase in the percentage to help with our effort. \$100's of thousands of dollars are needed for meaningful projects (a couple of which we have completed with the Monadnock Conservancy recently), and more funds could help our efforts. We could also promote donations to the fund (create a 401:3c entity for tax free status). No decision was made at this point but we will give more thought to the ideas.

We discussed town agricultural regulations and perhaps how farmers/producers might be impacted. Location of operations, roadside stand set-ups, off road parking, off site product sale, signage, etc. were among the issues discussed. We will continue to review local and state regulations to help ensure we continue to be an agriculture friendly community. Supporting and conserving viable agriculture activities continues to be of utmost importance to the Commission.

Permanent protection of the Cheshire County farm property continues to be a concern and to be pursued with County officials. While the total 640 acres of the County ownership is of interest, the approximately 141 acres of farm land and wetland are critical to be conserved including the 6700 feet of Connecticut River frontage. Restoration of the trail system was discussed and we reviewed some basic information that has been initiated to improve/restore the trails. It was suggested that perhaps Eversource or other businesses might be interested in assisting with the effort, including schools or other youth groups. We will continue to pursue the effort.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 am. Next meeting is scheduled for February 6, 2020 at 8:30 at the town hall.

Submitted by Marshall Patmos