

Westmoreland Conservation Commission meeting
May 5, 2022 (unapproved minutes)

Present: Marshall Patmos, April Ferguson, Jeanette Hubert, Perry Sawyer, Jean Rudolph, Jon Lounsbury, Doug Oatley

Meeting called to order at 8:30 am

Minutes of the April 26 meeting were approved with a couple grammatical changes.

Jon Lounsbury reported that the April 23 roadside clean-up that he and Andy Mackey organized this year was a big success. A number of volunteers helped distribute bags, vests and providing snacks and prizes including maple syrup from “Stuart and Johns” and the “Fergusons” and a gift certificate from “Barn and Thistle”. There were more than 160 bags of trash collected and other assorted stuff by 28 people cleaning up 30 miles of road in town and along the state roads. A reported will be prepared and sent to NH The Beautiful, State sponsor of community wide litter clean-up backed by the NH Department of Highways.

The issue of a timber sale on County property along River Road was discussed. Marshall followed up on it after visiting the site. The previous regeneration sale was justified in the management plan and Tree farm certification. The recent activity was apparently authorized by the County to remove some hazardous trees around the Nursing home. The harvesting has done much more than that. High quality trees have been harvested quite a distance from the Nursing home. An intent-to-cut was never sent to the town, or the state as required. Matt Kelly, Cheshire County Extension forester was notified, visited the site and followed up. County Commissioners have been notified along with NH District Forester. Harvest activity has ceased and it’s assumed the issue will be resolved.

We discussed a request from the New England Native Plant Trust in Framingham Mass concerning a rare American Bladderwort plant that is on County Farm property. They sought permission to visit the site and although it doesn’t seem to require permission to visit County property, they were referred to the County Commissioners.

We reviewed a survey of a proposed 19-unit storage facility located adjacent to a wetland and a brook at the industrial park on Route 12 across from London Crossroad. The request is from owners Patriot Holdings LLC of Las Vegas Nevada and designed by Fieldstone Consultants of Milford NH. It appears the structure doesn’t adhere to wetland/stream distance regulations. The zoning board of adjustment will apparently review the plans and decide to approve or not.

The proposed NH Municipal Technical Assistance Grant application was discussed. Before proceeding with the application, those of us who attended the Planning Board meeting where it was proposed understood that a committee from the various boards was to meet and discuss various options. It was apparently decided without input from formal meetings to proceed with the application. Our Commission continues to feel that although a review of regulations etc in the town is warranted, we unanimously disagree with application of the grant at this time primarily because of the housing requirements of the grant.

The Commission remains very concerned about environmental issues involving the new fire station. We reviewed the information presented at our 4/26 meeting with Steve Horton, the consultant hired to plan the new station. He was every helpful with his information about methods he will plan to prevent contamination from the cleaning of clothes, equipment and vehicles and control of excessive water runoff on and from the site. He will be researching and gathering increased information about the prevention of hazardous contamination on the site and will apparently be meeting with the Selectboard and Fire department about the plans for contaminant prevention. We hope to be able to meet with the Selectboard and perhaps Fire department to discuss these issues and resolutions at some point. The Commission will further discuss how and when to communicate with the Selectboard, Fire department and perhaps Steve Horton.

We are still wondering if a Federal Environmental Impact Study might be appropriate to determine the quality of the site and provide periodic monitoring. This would be a long term involved restrictive process. The process or one similar, perhaps privately or by the State might be appropriate to prevent the development of a hazardous waste site and avoid future legal action by authorities and/or downslope/downstream landowners. Pre-construction soil testing would provide valuable base data. We need to pursue various methods to accomplish the testing.

Our next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, May 19 at 7::00 PM at the Town Hall.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:46 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Marshall Patmos