

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
SEPTEMBER 9, 2015

PRESENT: Bob Boynton, Chairman, David McTigue, Jack Messe, Dixie Blease, Joanne Meshna, Lori Rautiola, Kleta Dudley (SoRLAC Representative)

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 at the Town Office.

Dixie made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2015 meeting. David seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The minutes of the August 12, 2015 meeting were reviewed and the following corrections were made: capitalize Conservation Commissions in all cases, page 1, first paragraph, first sentence should read "...that could be caused by Kinder Morgan."; page 1, fourth paragraph, first sentence should read "Mr. Radcliffe stated a normal State project could be stopped..."; page 2, second paragraph, third to last sentence should read "...right-of-way and already resource barren." Dixie made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Jack seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

7:45 p.m. Lisa Oden and Karen Miller:

Ms. Oden stated she had concerns regarding the proposed pipeline, and was asking for clarification on what Bob meant by town properties not being affected by the pipeline as he had stated previously that the Conservation Commission would not take a position either way as there were no Town properties involved. Bob stated he was only talking about Town owned conservation areas and lands that we hold easements on, and there are no Town properties being impacted. New England Forestry Foundation has easements on properties that abut the pipeline route. Bob gave Ms. Oden the contact information for New England Forestry Foundation.

Ms. Oden stated FERC wants the town to identify what needs to be avoided, minimized, mitigated or compensated and asked what input concerning the natural resources the Conservation Commission might like to contribute to that list, whether they are for, neutral, or against the pipeline. Bob stated he understood that and he attended a workshop a couple weeks ago with the Selectmen and Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC). They have maps of those regions, and he would like SWRPC to submit the maps to AECOM to indicate where the sensitive areas are located. Ms. Oden suggested it go through FERC first, and questioned why the information would be given over to AECOM. Bob stated we are not handing it over, it is all public knowledge under RSA 91-A.

Ms. Oden stated the Town should get compensated, not the State, if we fall into "plan B" and the Conservation Commission should be ready to say that is one of the things that they would like to see happen. Bob stated the Conservation Commission is ready to get involved, but they have to know what the permits are going to be, where wetlands are going to be impacted, and how much is going to be impacted. He added the most we can say at this time is if there is damage, we want mitigation.

Ms. Miller asked how our natural resources and water resources are not going to be impacted by the proposed project. Bob replied that he understands people want answers up front but that is impossible because it is such a large project, and we will not know the impact until the permits start to come in and a wetland scientist is hired. How much the mitigation is going to be is a very technical thing that the Conservation Commission cannot answer. Ms. Miller asked if there are experts that need to be contacted, such as a hydrologist, and Bob responded that process would most likely have to be put out for bids. Bob stated that the project is still in the design process; there are no hard specs so someone cannot be hired now. Ms. Miller stated the Town could request through FERC that Kinder Morgan pay for these services and Bob replied that request will be made at the right time. She added the Commission should be proactive and put these requests to FERC. Bob stated she should meet with the Selectmen on this because the map that Southwest has is valuable information to FERC and to AECOM. The Conservation Commission is going to wait until the permits come in and then discuss mitigation. Ms. Miller stated all the worst case scenarios need to be addressed to FERC. Bob noted the Selectmen carry more weight than the Conservation Commission. Ms. Oden and Ms. Miller stated they would like the Commission to submit the questions to FERC as well.

Ms. Miller noted she would like everyone to work together and would like to hear everyone's opinion on this. David, who is a hydrologist of 35 years, commented that he has heard a lot of nonsense on the effects of the pipeline. Dixie commented that we should submit our concerns regarding aquifers and wells. Bob stated that is the Selectmen's responsibility. There is an environmental impact report coming out in draft form, and that is the time that comments are most appropriate.

Ms. Miller stated she would like the Commission to take a vote on their position on the pipeline. Bob stated he understood her concerns but if the Commission is against it from day one, Kinder Morgan would state the Commission is predisposed to being against the pipeline. David replied the Commission did in fact take a vote on their decision to be neutral. Ms. Miller stated she is very opposed to the pipeline, the people in this town all matter, and we should be working together. Kleta questioned the thinking of the lawyers to not allow SWRPC to have the maps. Bob stated the purpose is to delay it.

New Business:

Jamie Pottern from Mount Grace Land Trust spoke on behalf of the Ayer and Gleason families regarding the farm at 179 Appleton Road, Claddagh Hill Farm. They want to protect the property and Mount Grace is working to help them make that happen by applying for some federal funding for an agricultural easement.

Dennis Gleason explained he was here about a year ago for the subdivision of the property. He wants to leave the bulk of the farm, approximately 75 acres, in conservation. They are working with the Forest Society. Mr. Gleason explained what they have done in Nashua with a Green School and natural farming.

Debbie explained they have raised farm animals, sheep, goats, horses, cows, chickens, ducks etc. and use them to teach sustainable farming and human education to the children because they want them to be connected with their food. Their hope is to bring back local farming by teaching them how to do that. Bob asked how the land in New Ipswich would tie into this. Debbie replied they have already started

with the pigs and cows and chickens. They raise their own meat, so this property would be for grass fed beef and they may put a farm school on the property for young adults. Kyle Ayer is currently the farmer for this property and lives on the property.

Bob asked what the Conservation Commission can do for them. Ms. Potter replied there is a program called ALE (Agricultural Land Easement) which will give 50% of the value for the agricultural easement and the owners would need to come up with the other 50%. They are looking for some financial support for the other 50% match. Bob asked if there was an estimate of how much money is needed. Ms. Potter replied they are still waiting on the final appraisal to come back but it is estimated to be 250,000 or more. Bob noted if the Conservation Commission were to contribute to the funds to help purchase an easement, they would hold an executory easement on the property and Mr. Ayer stated they were aware of that. Bob stated he liked and supported the operation and the Board will discuss if they may be able to support it financially. Dixie added she liked the operation as well. It was noted the process with the USDA takes about 14-18 months and they would not need the funds until then. A contribution by the Conservation Commission would be a pledge contingent upon the project being accepted. Ms. Potter asked if the Commission could make a decision by October.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Rautiola, Land Clerk