

Pownal Conservation Commission
Meeting minutes – January 23, 2012

Attendees:

Matt Welch, Ruth Hannan, Derek Lovitch, Rosemary Whitney

Minutes:

The first order of business was to elect a new chairperson for the committee. Matt expressed an interest in this and made a motion, which was seconded by Derek. The motion passed, making Matt Welch our new chairperson.

Regarding the recent timber harvest on the Town-owned Sweetser Road property, it was discussed that the work might not have been FSC-certified. We were not pleased with how some of the timber was left at the landing. Apparently, the logger went on to work on the Cemetery property as that was more profitable timber. Then, due to wet weather and the soft, muddy ground, some of the harvested timber was left lying at the landing until a later date. As a committee, we were not informed that the logger was leaving the Sweetser Road in that condition in order to go work on another property. It was also mentioned that a chipper and other equipment was recently seen by Allen Road (near the Sweetser Road lot) doing some clean-up work.

That discussion brought us to the next topic: How will we work with FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) in the future? What is the audit process? What problems were there with the Sweetser Road harvest? Was it FSC-certified? If we don't continue to pay the annual fee, can we re-join FSC when we want to do another harvest in the future? Can we only pay the fee in those years that we harvest?

Matt agreed to contact FSC and/or The Trust to Conserve Northeast Forest Lands to find out more info on these questions, as well as discuss problems with the Sweetser Road harvest from their point of view.

Matt brought to our attention a letter he received from Integrated Forest Management, Inc. (IFM) as a private landowner. IFM was the company used as the forester for the timber harvests completed over the last few years. The letter asked if the landowner would have any possible future business for IFM. This was interesting, given that we were not satisfied with the Sweetser Road harvest.

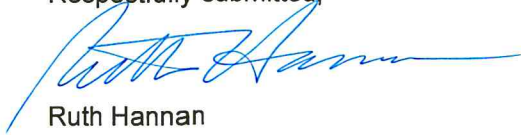
Committee members that have been part of the Conservation Commission for some time brought Rosemary (our newest member) up-to-speed on another topic: the Loring Lane property (Map 8, Lot 54). In previous meetings it was noted that there is another nearby Town-owned lot (Map 5 Lot 50) and perhaps the property on Lot 50 could be used to gain access to the land-locked Map 8, Lot 54. We explained that the commission attempted to have the Town look into the property boundaries, as they are questionable. We had previously contacted John Mann about the possibility of doing some preliminary survey work. During 2011, it was discussed with the Selectmen. But due to the sensitivity of abutting landowners and the cost of any survey work, the Selectmen chose not to pursue this any further.

Another topic discussed was the "mission" or "charge" of our commission. Now that a forestry plan is in place and the major timber harvests completed for now, our commission should begin

focusing on new topics. Also, given that we occasionally want to meet with the Selectmen, should we have our committee meetings on the same night of the week as the Selectmen (Monday)?

Ruth will contact the Selectmen on these questions and forward any info received to the other commission members. We will take that into consideration when deciding on a "permanent" night of the week for our meetings. For now, we have decided to hold our next meeting on the 4th Monday of the month – February 27th.

Respectfully submitted,



Ruth Hannan