

## STRAFFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes 26 January 2016

Present at the Justin Morrill Education Building at 7 p.m. were commission members: Tii McLane, Kate Root, J.T. Horn, Mike Hebb, Jared Jenisch and Steve Willbanks (Chair). Also present was Ron Rhodes, River Steward for the Connecticut River Watershed Council.

### Meeting Minutes:

- Approved 10/27/'15 Minutes
- Guest Speaker: Ron Rhodes was thanked for his help and resourcefulness in funding the replacement of the Maple Hill Road culvert this fall. Starting with a small contribution of remaining SCC streambank stabilization grant funds, he was able to leverage nearly \$150,000 in engineering and construction financing from a remarkable combination of federal, state and charitable foundation sources. Ron summarized the Maple Hill Road culvert replacement process and then explained that by matching Town culvert replacement priorities with replacement priorities set by Fish and Game and other state and federal water and land resources protection agencies and groups, sufficient funding can be cobbled together to solicit major charitable foundation funding. Each situation is different, he said, but with patience and creativity a lot can be accomplished. The SCC thanked Ron and will make an effort to encourage the Town of Strafford to take advantage of Ron's advice on future projects when local municipal funding is lacking.
- Trails, etc.: Mike—
  - A new trail segment from the Morrill Homestead through the Coburn property to the Cross-Town Trail has been slowed by issues with another landowner.
  - Mike summarized the orchid-introduction project in the Town Forest and reported on bear-nesting sites in the same area.
- Wetlands: Jared/Kate—
  - Looking forward to spring.
- Hemenway Road: Steve—
  - On Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>, there was a ceremony at John Hemenway's house to commemorate renaming Sawyer Mtn. Road in John's honor and a photo of the new road sign at the Taylor Valley Road intersection was passed around. It was reported that John was very pleased.
- Other: Linking Lands/Wildlife Observations: Tii/Kate—
  - Tii briefed the SCC on current Linking Lands issues.
  - Kate recounted her efforts to track an otter and monitor a bear den.
- Updates: Old City Rec. Area/Podunk timber cut:

- According to Old City caretaker, Tim McCormick, there should be some erosion-repair work done on the upper trail this summer. Although he didn't specifically request assistance, the SCC should consider offering to help.
- The Podunk timber-cut is proceeding. Although, according to one report, the actual cutting may be finished, site restoration will continue into the spring.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Willbanks, acting Secretary