

STRAFFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

May 26, 2015

Present at the Morrill Education Building at 7 p.m. were Commission members: Jared Jenisch, John Hemenway, Kate Root, Mike Hebb, Amy Metz (arriving later), and Steve Willbanks, Chair. Also in attendance were Patrick Mullens and Dori Wolfe of Wolfe Energy.

- Dori Wolfe, as co-developer with Brightfields Development, updated the SCC on the progress made to date on the proposed siting of a 4.9-megawatt solar photo-voltaic array on the remediated tailings pile at the Elizabeth Mine. Negotiations with the two private landowners involved and with the help of the Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation are proceeding favorably and the development team is preparing to submit an application for the project to the Public Service Board. Dori emphasized that this a clean energy initiative which has the support of Green Mountain Power and is expected to generate 8.8 million kWh of energy annually, supply electricity to more than 1,200 homes and convert the former super-fund site, currently unused, into a tax-generating asset. There were questions and some difference of opinion on the economics and benefits of the project. Dori asked that if the SCC approves of the project it consider preparing a letter of support, but that there was no hurry. No action was taken at this time.
- Minutes of 4/28/15 were approved.
- Old City Falls Recreation Area: It is open for the season and, according to the caretaker, Tim McCormick, who was unable to attend, it was generally in good shape. The outdoor toilet is still in need of some repair work, but is functional.
- Annual Election of Officers, postponed from the April meeting, was held: Steve Willbanks, chair, and Amy Metz, secretary, were re-elected. Since all money transactions must be managed by the Town Treasurer, it was decided not fill the treasurer's position at this time.
- Maple Hill Culvert: The project will be proceeding. All necessary funding has been obtained and Northwoods Excavating will be the contractor. The project could start in July or August. Ron Rhodes of the Connecticut River Watershed Council should be commended for arranging the funding for this project through a variety of grants and required no local property tax funding.
- Invasive Plant Removal: Tii McLane has reported that letters to Taylor Valley landowners with glossy buckthorn infestations were mailed and two of the three have

given permission to have it removed when grant funding is available. Kate Root has made copies of informational posters identifying 'Least Wanted' invasive species and will be distributing them in public places around town.

- Wetlands Inventory: After a trial visit to a So. Strafford wetland, Mike Hebb and Jared Jenisch have developed two teams and will be scheduling further wetland investigations.
- Orchid Tours/Trails: The prime viewing time for the orchids should be in the next few weeks. Mike did announce that National Trails Day is Saturday, June 6th and he is inviting the public to join him to hike the Cross-Strafford Trail. Details to be announced.
- Podunk Pond/Timber Tours: Steve is organizing a publicity campaign and tour to alert the public that the ANR has plans to remove the dam at Podunk Pond. The pond tour will Saturday, 5/30. The tour of a planned timber cut in Podunk Wildlife Management Area will be scheduled later in June.
- Hazard Mitigation Committee: Chuck Sherman reported that there had been one meeting, in which the *ad hoc* committee discussed and pinpointed potential hazard locations within the town. The spread of invasive plant species was also classifiable as a hazard.
- Draft Bylaws: Since there were several members absent, the SCC agreed to postpone discussion until next month.
- Next Meeting: June 23, '15 at the Morrill Ed. Bldg.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Willbanks, Recording Secretary *pro temp*