Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission Meeting
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH
Meeting Minutes – January 6, 2025

Note: Minutes are subject to review, correction, and approval by the Commission. Review, correction, and approval of minutes generally occur at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission.

CALL TO ORDER
The meeting of the Swanzey Conservation Commission was called to order by Chair Cheri Domina at 4:02 p.m. Committee members present: Chair Domina, Bud Winsor, Mark Scalera, Jay Ward, Bonnie Hart, Bob Goodrich, Alternate Jane Johnson.

ABSENT
Nancy Karlson and Wallace Smith absent. The Chair seated Johnson for Karlson.

OTHERS PRESENT
Assistant Town Planner Stephon Mehu

MINUTES
- The commission members considered the meeting Minutes for December 4, 2024. There was a **motion** by Ward to approve the Minutes of December 4, 2024 as presented. There was a second to the motion by Winsor and no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

NEW BUSINESS
Public Input—Johnson noted that SWRPC's Natural Resource & Energy Committee is looking for members.

Review of Planning Board/Zoning Board Activity
- Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) Variance for Drive-Thru Restaurant at Rte. 12 and Marcy Hill Rd. Sought for leach fields within 125 feet of designated wetland – Mehu stated the Variance is for a proposed drive-thru, retail shop, yet to receive Site Plan Review. The location was found to be next to wetlands, with the exact location of the proposed building being on a site that may have been filled in, in decades prior (Goodrich indicated it was filled in at one time for a planned gas station). With the wetlands present and the impact it would have on wildlife and the local habitats, the Commission decided to write a memo in apprehension of the variance for the setback clause and overall project construction at this location.

Annual Report final draft— Domina informed everyone that the final draft of the annual report submission, was submitted.

Finance Report for 2024—Domina presented bank balances and an activity report for 11/1/23 – 11/30/24.

Membership for 2025—Domina said Goodrich and Smith have been up for renewal in 2024; Scalera and Ward in 2025. Terms expire at town meeting, but people can continue to serve until someone new is appointed, according to Michael Branley. People should be getting emails from the town to be reappointed.

OLD BUSINESS
Open Space Planning Update (Jeff Littleton)

Open Space Plan – next steps

Littleton spoke on the process and results pertaining to the Wetlands Evaluation he and the Commission worked on through 2024. Along with the data collected for the evaluation, he presented the opportunity to utilize said data and compile materials to help the Commission create a new Open Space Plan for the Town. This plan would coincide with the goals of the Town's Master Plan, identifying focus areas in the community, using GIS to identify areas it would be prudent to conserve, regulate, identify and evaluate for potential acquisition.

Littleton mentioned that his crew collected all the field data last summer during the wetlands evaluation, while they had permission to enter various properties.

Scalera asked about state grant/funds to finance the execution of the work and Littleton mentioned the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, Monadnock Conservancy, land trusts, and other entities that may be potential sources for funds.

Littleton went on to explain that the properties of relevance for the Open Space Plan would be evaluated for biodiversity, habitat diversity, rarity, landscape analysis, ecological resilience, wildlife corridors, drinking water, and climate change resilience. The Commission then discussed having an Open Space Plan formed in time for the 2026 Town Warrant. Littleton estimated that the completion of work for the Open Spaces Plan would cost, roughly $15-20,000, for analysis, meetings, and outreach.

The ConCom would need to meet with the public and town boards to decide what our priorities, goals and objectives should be for open space conservation and regulation in Swanzey. How creative do we want to get?

After Littleton departed, Commission decided to tell Moosewood to draft up a contract to finish the Open Space Planning work in 2025.

Moosewood Ecological Invoice

An invoice from Moosewood Ecological for their work on Wetlands Evaluation was presented for approval. This was over and above the contract amount, but expected. The invoice was for $3600.

Motion was made by Ward to approve payment of invoice for $3600 to Moosewood Ecological, second by Winsor. No further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed**.

Wetland Conservation District Amendments—Jan. 9 is the Planning Board public hearing for all amendments. Deliberative Session is Feb. 4—may also come up for discussion.

Barry Camp 2025 Scholarship Applicants

Seven applicants submitted applications for scholarship. Commission decided to select awardees at random by number generated by computer. Konnor O'Donnell selected as first recipient for Fish Camp and Arlo Kennedy selected as second recipient, for Mini-Camp.

Motion made by Scalera to accept recipients and increase scholarship funds from $1000 to $1200 to fully cover both recipients' camp sessions, seconded by Hart. No further discussion. All in favor. **Motion passed**.

Swanzey Lake Watershed Management Plan Work Group report—Winsor reported that landowners on the Swanzey Lake side of East Shore Road, near Talbot Hill Rd, were contacted concerning turning Talbot Hill into a maintained trail to reduce water runoff and redirect; next Watershed Management Meeting to take place in February.

Mt. Cresson Timber Harvest Update
Mt. Cresson timber harvest proceeds and trail planning discussed; possibility of creating program for environmental awareness and the like discussed. Meadowsend has flagged a potential hiking trail for us to review. Hart to take helm for planning out hike to see contractor flagging. Invoice 2024-1149 for $279.30; approval for payment sought out by Domina.

Motion by Johnson to approve payment of $279.30 for Meadowsend invoice, to be paid from the Cresson Forest Account, seconded by Winsor. No further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed**.

Next Meeting: February 3, 2025

ADJOURNMENT
Motion was made by Winsor to adjourn, second by Hart, without further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.*** Adjournment occurred at 5:58 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephon Mehu, Assistant Town Planner

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