

**NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**January 18, 2012**  
**MINUTES**

Members present: Rich Bellerose, Kevin Fife, Cathy Thibeault and Dave Krause. Also present: Mary Lee, Gail Darrell, Jane Uscilka, Pam Boyd, Glenn Smith, Lisa Swancott and Ed Greene.

**Info Session: Rights Based Ordinance –Presentation by Gail Darrell, Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund** – Gail Darrell reviewed the role of the Environmental Legal Defense Fund and the current legal status of municipalities relative to states and corporations. Municipalities are subordinate to states and corporations have rights equal to states. The Northern Pass project is legal and the town has no ability to say it does not want it within town boundaries. The proposed “Right to Sustainable Energy Future and Community Self-Government Ordinance” is a tool to be used by municipalities to protect the natural resources and safety of its residents. The Ordinance is an amendment to the law which gives corporations rights over people’s rights.

There was discussion about the definition of “Unsustainable energy systems” and whether this ordinance would prohibit other types of renewable energy projects. Gail Darrell said the purpose is to give local control and require that a sustainable energy plan be developed and adopted by the town. Ed Greene stated he is opposed to passing an ordinance for the purpose of stopping Northern Pass, adding that we need the energy and it has to come from somewhere. Gail responded that this ordinance gives the town the ability to decide whether it wants a project in the town. The ordinance is aimed at land acquisition by corporations for unsustainable energy systems.

Mary Lee plans to present this ordinance via petition and it has not yet been determined by the Selectmen whether it will be a ballot vote or discussed at the Town Meeting. Mary Lee stated that several towns in the Northern Pass route are considering the same ordinance and she sees it as the only way to stop the project. Ed Greene and Glenn Smith both questioned whether this would stop the project.

Many questions followed relative to the appropriateness of wording of some sections of the ordinance, how it would impact future uses, whether it is a land use ordinance and its purpose. The Selectmen would govern the ordinance if passed and would have to ability to rescind it if there were a situation that would cause a liability issue.

Lisa Swancott asked the Commission for their opinion on the ordinance for her to report back to the Selectmen. Rich Bellerose responded that more time is needed for the Commission to come to a decision.

**Minutes:** Dave Krause moved, seconded by Cathy Thibeault to approve the minutes of Nov. 30, 2011 as read. Motion passed. Cathy Thibeault moved, seconded by Dave Krause to approve the minutes of January 11, 2012 as read. Motion passed.

**Correspondence:**

- UMLAC survey
- The Legacy
- DES – 2 Glines Park Road septic system
- PSNH maintenance of power line notice.
- Conservation News

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eliza Conde, Secretary

*Minutes approved 02-23-2012*