

NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
May 20, 2015
MINUTES

Members present: Sterling Blackey, Patty Howe, Dave Krause and Kevin Fife.

Minutes: Dave Krause moved, seconded by Sterling Blackey to accept the minutes of March 18, 2015 as read. Motion passed.

Five Rivers Conservation Trust: Ken Stearn of Five Rivers explained that they are working with the Corliss family to place the farm in a Conservation easement. The Corliss Farm is a working dairy farm with good soils, open fields and forest land. Five Rivers Conservation Trust is available to help find funding to purchase the development rights which is normally a combination of federal funding through NRCS and local donations. Gaining the support of the town is important to help with fundraising. Beth McGuinn, also of Five Rivers noted that while Northfield is not really within the Five Rivers area of concentration it is surrounded by the 16 towns they do work with and they are willing to consider easements in Northfield. Five Rivers is supported by membership and works with volunteers to protect land. They concentrate on small farms of local interest. Larger trusts look for projects with a broader interest such as Mt. Major. Five Rivers generally works with towns to secure funding. Costs over and above the actual easement include survey work, legal documents and stewardship funds for future monitoring of the property. She emphasized that it takes community effort to make an easement happen. Funding may be available through ALE (Agricultural Land Easement) at NRCS and there may be some state LCHIP funds available for matching funds. If an ALE grant is applied for, it is required to have 50% matching funds.

The first step will be to update an earlier appraisal in order to determine the cost of an easement. Then, if the town is behind the project, a plan will need to be formulated to determine the goals of the landowners, the attributes of the property, the sources of funding, baseline documentation, etc. Ken Stearn emphasized that it takes at least a year to complete an easement with more time needed if financing is sought. He added that if the town gets behind this project, then Five Rivers will be a partner to help it happen. Ken suggested talking with the Selectmen and residents to see if there is support for the project as without the town's support it is hard to get any momentum. Sterling Blackey will seek an estimate of the cost to update the existing assessment for review.

Maps, Kiosks, trails, etc.: Mapping and kiosks are still a work in progress. Help is needed to create maps for the trails by gps.

PB/ZBA applications: Members reviewed an application for a sign on Rte 140 and made no comment.

Other: A meeting will be arranged with an abutter to discuss access to town property.

Correspondence:

- Environmental News
- Members reviewed a letter from the Tilton Selectmen to DES relative to concerns about hazardous waste, etc. and the expansion of the Bestway/Casella project on Rte 140 in Belmont.
- Forestry notification – Karl Adams
- Big Trees of NH

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eliza Conde, Secretary

Minutes approved 08-26-2015