

**Minutes of Joint Meeting of the Board of Selectmen
Conservation Commission and Forest Advisory Committee,
Town of Freedom, NH 03836 - Wednesday September 27, 2017, 1:00pm Town Hall**

Present: Board of Selectmen ó Leslie Babb, Neal Boyle, Ernest Day, Jr.
Conservation Commission ó Paul Elie, Alice Custard, Sarah Owens, Cheryl Harris
Forest Advisory Committee ó Ron Newbury, Janet Johnson, Dave Charrette, Rob Hatch,
Chuck Depew

Others Present: Susan Francher and Tracy Bosivert of the NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources; NH Fish and Game Sergeant Alex Lopashanski; Town Forester Barry Keith; Town Administrator Karen Hatch and approximately 35 members of the general public.

Representatives from the NH Land & Community Heritage Investment Program and Trust for Public Lands were unable to attend.

Meeting was called to order at 1:02pm by Selectman Babb and introductions were made.

Babb stated that this was an information meeting only and proceeded with explaining the history of the acquisition of the Town Forest which was begun by the Friends of Trout Pond. He gave the financial breakdown of the monies used to buy the properties of which the Town actually gave a small percentage. It was noted that The Forest Legacy Program funded most of the project.

A steering and stewardship committees were formed to create the Stewardship Plan to be used to regulate the Town Forest and to ensure that the purposes of the forest were upheld in accordance with the stipulations set forth when receiving the Forest Legacy funding.

There was a general discussion of the forest and its uses and questions were asked to the State representatives.

There was discussion about possible changes to the stewardship plan and easement. Francher responded that it is possible but very difficult. The state has to also agree with proposed changes.

There was a question regarding the timber harvesting within the forest and Keith with an aid of a map explained that and spoke of other allowed uses of the forest.

The discussion got more specific when Ramon Marks brought up the topic of trapping and the safety concerns he and many of those in the audience have. Francher explained that by state law hunting and trapping are allowed but decisions to place stipulations lies within the town and working with Fish and Game. Francher also stated that amendment changes start with FAC and FCC.

There was a great deal of discussion on this particular issue as a trapping permit had been granted this year along with a permit to bait bear. There was discussion of removing trapping from the stewardship plan.

Sergeant Lopashanski spoke of the laws of trapping and answered many questions. It was his recommendation to not eliminate trapping but to review case by case. He stated that our town forest is not unique and user groups don't usually conflict.

Mike Gaudette former member of the Conservation Commission felt the Commission should encourage trapping in certain zones. Discussion continued on the dates and possible signage during hunting and trapping seasons.

Elie stated that when both applications were received for approval there was a disconnect and miss information and their concern was for safety not against trapping.

Both Elie and Babb thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was adjourned at 2:13pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Karen Hatch
Town Administrator