

Freedom Conservation Commission
Tuesday, 21 February, 2023
7:00 pm
Freedom Town Hall

Minutes

Quorum Check, Roll Call – The meeting was called to order at 7 pm by Jeff Nicoll. Present are: Jeff Nicoll, Alice Custard, Sue Hoople, R.A. Oram, Paul Elie, Linda Mailhot, Michele Keenan. Jill Emerson, Matt Howe and Hailey Williams (GMCG) are also present. A quorum is present.

Approval of 17 Jan 2023 FCC Meeting Minutes –correct name to “Sarah/Sally”. Linda made a motion to approve as amended, Oram seconded. APPROVED

Business properly presented to the commission

Water quality testing presentation from Jill Emerson, GMCG – Hailey is giving the RIVERS presentation. This program assesses water quality throughout the watershed. Salt is increasing and that can be seen on the chart for Danforth Brook. This is an issue throughout the watershed. Additional parameters are tracked at the Cold Brook site. Ammonium, Nitrate and Chloride exceed the standards at that site. This site is near a beaver dam.

Shawtown Brook – this was the first year of monitoring.

Square Brook – all stable and healthy. Conductivity exceeds the standard, salt is increasing at this site. Ammonium and Chloride exceeded their standard, possibly due to runoff from the proximity of the road.

West Branch – ph is slightly unstable – next to lumber mill, this is one of the potential reasons this may be happening.

Huckins Pond outflow – all stable.

Cold Brook – all parameters were stable.

Paul asked if there is information available about other towns around here that are doing brining. Madison is the only town around here that is doing brining. Re: cost- upfront there is a bit more cost, but in the longer term salt use is reduced, and affects on infrastructure also reflect some savings. The State can be petitioned to do low salt or no salt zones.

Sue requested information about some of the chemical plumes that are happening, and what testing would need to be done in the event of a catastrophic incident.

Actionable items for ammonium and nitrates? The survey location was just moved, it may be affected by that over the coming years. Those items are typical of lake populations and fertilizers. These levels could be from natural reasons.

Why is one area a low impact concern? You are seeing human activity having an effect, but it is not at a level that will be affecting the natural life of the area. Keeping under 500 is preferred for rural areas. Anything over that will start to show detrimental impacts.

In many of the places there has not been a lot of change. The universal data show an increase in salt. These are not detrimental, but they are increasing year after year.

Regarding individual wells – there is a program called Get Wet that screens drinking water.

A culvert program is coming up in April. A culvert survey was done in Freedom in 2020/21. The data is available, but difficult to read. The meeting will help clarify what needs to be addressed in each town. The meeting will be on Zoom. Details will be sent once they are confirmed.

GMCG has shared reports for Loon Lake, Middle Danforth and Round Pond. They will be reviewing them in depth soon. Loon Lake has low dissolved oxygen levels, which indicates that there are dead zones in the lake. This is a sign that it will start to be more susceptible to human impact. This monitoring will be done again this year.

GMCG will be working with the Friends of Danforth again this year. They have generated all of the revenue from their community.

Discussion was held regarding the type of boat that is needed for ease of sampling.

DES grant is in place to do some projects with the Friends of Danforth this summer.

August 23 – GMCG is hosting a UNH workshop for Conservation Commissions and highway departments regarding road salt best practices and road salt reduction.

Review and discussion of Feb 1 2023 FAC meeting minutes – Year is wrong, January meeting was cancelled. Line item transfer for forester fees – what is that? This is for Barry's fees for the upcoming year. Line item transfer is the method by which the funds are moved from one account into another. Scrub Oak Scramblers – Michele brought this topic to the FCC on behalf of the FAC.

Melissa will email minutes of the FCC and the FAC to Janet Johnson and Jeff Nicoll when she sends them to the office.

Regarding name on invoices, activity schedule – this referenced the 2023 activity schedule and one invoice that the FCC had received previously without that information on it. Jeff will respond to Barry requesting that any documents sent to us must identify who it was produced by.

Re: scope of work for the road project. Jeff had requested that Janet get that information.

Re: Barry being the only point of contact – this was regarding the contractor contact while the work is being done, not for the initial bid process.

Any change orders or additional expenditures would need Board approval.

Linda suggests providing the template for the Scope of Work to Barry and having him put his work plan on it. Jeff will send the template to Janet, to have her forward to Barry with a request that he correct the dates, then complete the template, using his draft activity schedule inserted in the final form. The FCC will vote on approving that at their next meeting.

Review of Town Forester work plan – see above

Conservation Land Inventory project discussion – Paul and Michele took an initial look at this. RSA 36.A – Conservation Commission establishment. Instructs the CC to keep an index of natural areas, etc. Engineering firms can be outsourced. An analysis was done several years ago, done by Kevin Ryan (FB Associates). Michele is in contact with him, and has asked for a cost estimate for doing this type of work. Examples were distributed, for the Board to review and discuss at a later date. The Board feels that a simpler type document is preferred. At the next meeting talk about the goal, and adopt a table of contents for the NRI.

Approval of invoices and contracts - none

Other business to come before the commission – FCC rotation of members to the FAC – from FCC Rules of Procedure –

Article 4 Section 2 – The Conservation Commission and Forest Advisory Committee shall consist of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, each officer elected by their respective Commission or Committee. The Committee representative to the Commission shall be appointed by the Committee Chairperson. The representative will serve as the liaison between the Commission and the Committee. The representative will not have voting rights on Commission matters, except if appointed as a member of the Commission. All Commission and Committee members shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

Article 5 Section 11 - SECTION 11 - The Committee shall have between five (5) and seven (7) members, and must include a representative from the FCC, Selectboard, and a Planning Board ex officio member.

Jeff will check on this to see if the FCC representative is able to abstain from FAC votes, or vote “present”.

Jeff made a motion that he will send correspondence to NH Municipal Association to find out if we are able to abstain or vote present on FAC issues. Linda recommends revising the procedures to indicate that the FCC representative to the FAC will not have voting privileges. Jeff withdrew his motion. Revisions to the Rules of Procedure will be addressed at the next FCC meeting.

Jeff will attend the next FAC meeting, March 1. April is the joint meeting. Oram will attend the next meeting, May.

Cell tower – not allowed.

Annual training – there is money available.

Public Comment

Michele made a motion to adjourn at 9:38 pm, Alice seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Donaldson
Recording Secretary

Note: Deadline for agenda items for this meeting closed at 12pm on February 14, 2023