

Town of Farmington  
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, December 14, 2023  
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

**Commission Members Present:**

Bill Fisher, Chairman  
Richard Ballou, Vice Chairman  
Jim Pollard, Secretary  
Gerry Vachon, Selectmen's Rep  
Amber Hall

**Others Present:**

Travis Yandow, Eversource Energy  
Coner Madison, GZA GEO Environmental

**1). Call to Order:**

Chairman Fisher called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

**2). Pledge of Allegiance:**

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3). Public Comment:** None

Mr. Fisher said no members of the public were present but if anyone wished to come in and make any statements or ask questions or wants to know if they have something they might be able to help them with to come on in and he will keep the public comments open until the end of the meeting.

**4). Review of Minutes:**

Mr. Fisher said he didn't have copies of the last minutes so they will postpone that to their next meeting.

**5). Old Business:**

**Town Cleanup-** Mr. Fisher said it was a short time getting it together and then the weather did not play with us and it was rainy and cold. He said he waited around here for about an hour and Mr. Pollard was here with him and nobody showed up which he didn't blame them. He said they decided to cancel the cleanup and they will give it another try in the spring.

He said the weather is getting too bad to be out there on the roads picking up trash it's too dangerous, too cold, too wet and too easy to catch a cold and nobody wants to be sick with Santa Claus coming in a few weeks. Thank you for those that did make comments on our website and asked questions. We appreciate it and we'll try again in the spring he said.

**Any Other Old Business-** None

**6). New Business:**

**Special Use Permit Application for Eversource Energy Y170 Transmission Line Structure**

Replacement Project Farmington, New Hampshire. The project involves the replacement of a utility pole location, Structure 80 along the existing transmission line.

Request the Conservation Commission Chairman provide comments for Special Use Permit application Eversource Energy Y170 Transmission Line Structure Replacement Project Farmington, New Hampshire to the Planning Department.

Request the Conservation Commission Chairman to sign Wetlands Application for Eversource Energy Y170 Transmission Line Structure Replacement Project Farmington, New Hampshire if required.

Eversource Licensing Dept. rep Travis Yandow and GZA Project Manager Coner Madison came forward and gave copies of the SUP application and related documents to the members.

Mr. Madison said he has never been in front of Farmington so he would go through a little spiel about the permitting process and the construction sequence and if they have any questions to feel free to chime in.

Mr. Fisher asked about the size of the property affected.

Mr. Madison said its 3,900 sq. ft. of temporary wetland impact.

Mr. Fisher said in the packet he read that these wetlands are seasonal and it doesn't stay flooded all the time but the ground is soft and they have to build some type of platform around where the pole is and he has seen that along Rt. 16 between exits 15 and 17.

Mr. Madison said they have done work off of Rt. 16 in Rochester as well and that's the timber matting they will be putting down and then began a review of the basic scope of the project. He said this is a proposed 1 utility pole structure replacement that is currently a laminate wood structure. He said that Eversource has seen throughout the years that water would get down thru the cracks in the laminate wood and the wood would often delaminate or cause some structural issues. He said one of Eversource's main things this year and in the next 5 years is to make sure all of the laminate wood structures are replaced.

He said for the Y170 they are replacing every laminate wood structure on this line which starts at the substation right by Rt. 16 in Rochester, goes thru Farmington and ends in Milton at Task Farm Road.

Mr. Yandow said those poles would be replaced from laminate wood to steel.

Mr. Madison said they are proposing to replace them with steel and this particular structure will be around the same height so he looked into the engineering plans and they won't be increasing the right-of-way width at all, they're not clearing any trees and they are not adding any new lines in. This is just a laminate wood pole structure to a steel pole structure replacement he said.

Mr. Vachon asked if it's "cut and kick" or if they're just setting a new pole and then transitioning over.

Mr. Madison said it is an angle structure so he believes it would be shown on the plan and it will be 5 ft. closer to the Rochester border. He said as far as the permitting goes they have quite a

few permits and he talked with Planning Director Kyle Pimental and he wanted to get the permits squared away so they will be sending the Town all of the permit approvals including the EPA construction general permit that they have to file a Notice of Intent for and that's a 14 day review so they will file that about a month before they actually start construction and he will be providing Mr. Pimental with the NOI number.

Mr. Madison said on the state level they have an estuary permit for temporary wetland impacts that involves the timber matting they will be installing in this wetlands and it's only for one growing season and then they will be taking that timber matting out. He said they qualify for estuary permit notification which they will be applying for at the end of Dec./beginning of Jan. He said they also have an uplands permit and it's not really wetlands related but to be fully disclosed they have an Alteration of Terrain Permit which was filed with the state in July and they are working on the approval and they will provide that information as well. The Town received a copy of that on July 28 he said.

Mr. Madison said as far as the schedule goes this work includes a good portion of Rochester so they have to get to it from Betz Road so it is somewhat connected in that aspect. He said they're hoping to start around mid-to the end of Jan. but he was not sure where this particular work falls as that also includes the work in Milton. He said it would be from Jan. and then these mats are only allowed in thru one growing season so they would be taking them out at the latest next winter.

He said as far as construction goes they will be adhering by the 2019 Best Management Practices manual for utility maintenance work so they will be inspecting the silt fence and straw wattle once a week and they won't include any straw wattle that has plastic welding on it and it will all be a fabric material and that's just a NH Fish & Game recommendation that they've cast through the entire state. He said they will be inspecting the timber matting which needs to be cleaned going in and coming out so they are not introducing any invasive species and they also clean it for DOT purposes so they're not getting mud all over the roads.

Mr. Madison said his last section was and it's pretty short for this project but for AOT permits you're required to coordinate with NH Fish & Game and the NH Natural Heritage Bureau for any protected species be it reptiles, turtles, snakes or plants. He said in the Farmington section there were no hits for either of those so coordination was not required for this section but it was required for the overall works specifically in Rochester. He said they could walk thru the plans as well and asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Fisher asked if he had the name of this right-Eversource Energy Y170 Transmission Line Structure Replacement Project for Farmington.

Mr. Madison said that's correct.

Mr. Fisher said he would have to send a letter to Mr. Pimental with any of their comments. He said it looks to him from reading the packet that all appropriate protective requirements are being taken care of and the ground is being taken care of by using this matting which is going to

be cleaned before and after.

Mr. Madison said for the record they will be having a road coming in from Rochester where they will be installing gravel so the equipment can make it out there.

Mrs. Hall asked if that is what triggered the need for an AOT.

Mr. Madison said yes.

Mr. Fisher asked how long they expect it to take just here in Farmington.

Mr. Yandow said they don't know the exact timeframe of when it will occur but when it does start to finish it should probably be about a month between getting the mats in, doing the drilling, the line work and then pulling the mats out.

Mrs. Hall asked when the new pole goes in and then takes a period of time to transfer all the wires to new pole if they are taking the old pole out after that.

Mr. Yandow and Mr. Madison said yes.

Mrs. Hall asked if they would pull it out completely or cut it.

Mr. Madison said they'd be pulling this one right out. He said if it's in wetlands sometimes the state likes them to cut it so they don't disturb it anymore but this one will be upland so they actually come out pretty easily.

Mr. Pollard asked what they do with the old poles.

Mr. Yandow said they usually have their civil contractors or sometimes they hire a third party to pick them up and sometimes the landowners ask them to keep them on site or provide them with the poles and they do something with them. He said in the past some of the wood structures had an oil coating on them so they're not the best to keep around so the contractors usually bring them to a facility to properly dispose of them.

Mr. Pollard said in Auburn, Maine they have a waste to energy facility and you would think they would run those through something like that. He said it's gas fired but they burn everything.

Mr. Yandow said those structures have a lot of metal hardware attached to them and he didn't know if those facilities would burn that.

Mr. Pollard said they burn metal they burn everything. He said it's like a giant cement mixer and it's gas fired like a blast furnace and they run everything through.

Mr. Fisher said the chemical coatings to preserve the wood might pollute the atmosphere by burning that stuff.

Mr. Pollard said they'd be good for use as pilings somewhere if someone put them in the ocean.

Mr. Vachon asked if it's just 1 pole and it looks like its 4 or 5 that are through there.

Mr. Madison said in Farmington it's just 1 pole but in Rochester it's much more.

Mr. Yandow said they would be permitting separately with Rochester.

Mr. Fisher said we are lucky that it just caught one corner of Farmington property and there's only 1 pole in that 1 corner.

Mr. Vachon said he looked at the satellite image and it looks like there are 5 in Farmington.

Mr. Madison said he only has 1 on this one.

Mr. Vachon said it turns and goes over the Spaulding Turnpike and according to the satellite image that turn is in Farmington.

Mr. Madison said he had that turn in Milton and he can double check it. He said they are just replacing structure 80 so that would be one regardless.

Mr. Vachon asked if the rest out there are still wood or will still be wood.

Mr. Madison said #81 and #82 are steel as they went in there and changed the large corner angles and the rest they are going to be changing out. He said there are 5 or 6 on this project that are already turned to steel.

Mrs. Hall said they are accessing Farmington and asked if they are going to build the road in Rochester and traverse down the existing corridor to get to that section in Farmington.

Mr. Madison said yes.

Mr. Fisher said he gathered there are no real concerns and they feel all conditions to protect the area are being implemented. He then asked for a motion for him to provide Mr. Pimental with a letter with their comments.

**Motion:** So moved by Mr. Ballou and seconded by Mrs. Hall.

**Vote:** the motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Fisher said he would get a letter off tonight to Mr. Pimental and he will get them that information. He said some people come with their applications to the state already made out and asked if they needed his signature on anything as the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Madison said not for this and Mr. Pimental has all of his contact information and they can go through him if needed.

Mr. Fisher thanked Mr. Madison and Mr. Yandow for coming out and explaining this to them.

**2023 Thompson Conservation Easement Monitoring Report-** Mr. Fisher said they received an annual monitoring report on what is going on and he got this from the Moose Mountain Regional Greenways. He said they did a visit on the Thompson property on Nov. 3 and he received this report a couple of weeks ago. He said he didn't have electronic copies so he didn't send it out but he has the paper copy here.

He said they did a walk of the land and they found no discrepancies and everything looked like it was in great shape and there are some pictures of some the property that they walked. He said they compared things from last year and found some trees bent over which they said was natural because of the weather that might have to come out and one picture shows a boundary pin and a marker. They just informed us that they saw no discrepancies so there are no required actions by us on anything he said.

**SELT Accelerating Conservation Sustaining Stewardship Donation Request-** Mr. Fisher said he also received a Southeast Land Trust donation request and they are asking for a donation from the Con Com and he would love to do this but they're going to be expending more money on the Cartwright property donation and they can do this later after the fact if they need to but he is not in favor of doing this right now.

He said for one, it's not for any properties in Farmington and read it's for properties in Madbury, Barrington, Exeter, East Kingston and Kingston. He said we are very close to getting the property donation to Farmington that they've been working for 360 + acres and once we have that we're probably going to have to get a survey done, get a parking lot and a kiosk put in so we are going to be spending quite a bit of money to get this going. For right now my recommendation is we hold off on a donation to SELT at this time for this property he said. He asked the members if there was any discussion on that and how they all felt about it. Mrs. Hall said she agreed with Mr. Fisher if it doesn't go to any Farmington specific property. Mr. Fisher said what money they have is probably about \$100,000 and none of it came from taxes it came from Current Use applications but that was put here for the use of Farmington primarily. He said they have used money in the past because they do have it to get properties within Farmington into conservation easements and they have given a little bit outside but in this case for right now he'd like to hold off on this if the board agrees with him.

Consensus of the members was to agree with Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Fisher said then they will hold off on that until a later time.

**NH Dept. of Environmental Services Request for More Information Expedited Minimum Impact Project Permit (RSA 482-A) NHDES File #2023-02911 Subject Property 14 Grondin Drive, Farmington Tax Map R15, Lot 1.**

Mr. Fisher said they got a few letters in from NH DES and there is no action required on their part or on the part of Farmington this is all for the applicants. He said this is all packages that they looked at in the past and this one is for the property up on Grondin Drive. He said this is where there was minimal impact to the wetlands area where they were redefining the property areas for some duplexes and they're subdividing the property for them. He said NH DES needed to know some more information from them for their standard wetland application form and it doesn't go into a whole lot of detail on what is needed it just says they need more information.

**NHDES Request for More Information Expedited Minimum Impact Project Permit (RSA 482-A) NHDES File #2023-02905 Ten Rod Road, Farmington Tax Map R38, Lot 8-2.-**

Mr. Fisher said this was that property that is just off Ten Rod Road it comes down on the side and spreads out and they were trying to get an access across a wetlands area to a back parcel property so they can build a home. He said they had questions on the little critters living out there they weren't sure how much NH Fish & Game had really looked at so they didn't give them a report from Fish & Game. He said in our paperwork it said it was minimal impact and no endangered species noted but they didn't get that part of the paperwork so they're asking for that information from the applicant.

**NHDES Initial Monitoring Report Land Resources Management NHDES File #2021-03814, 115 NH Rt. 11, Farmington Tax Map R003, Lot 004.**

Mr. Fisher said this has been a favorite of the Planning Board for a long time and this is the property down by PIP Rental where the family is putting in a house and barn down in the road where they have actually cut through a dike and

destroyed 2 wetlands areas. He said DES did a walk-through of the property and all requirements that were deemed necessary to be completed before they begin construction i.e. put the dike back together and restore the 2 wetlands has been done. He said he didn't know if the members have noticed going by but they are doing some digging out there now and starting to do the improvements but they have completed all the requirements the state put in for them to do.

**Any Other New Business- Con Com Mixer-**Mr. Fisher said he received notice of the Conservation Commissions Mixer on Thurs., Feb. 15, 2024 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Great Hall on Main Street in Wolfeboro. He read they were invited to join MMRG in bringing together the 9 Con Com's in their service area and that would be Brookfield, Farmington, Middleton, Milton, New Durham, Ossipee, Tuftonboro, Wakefield and Wolfeboro.

He read each commission will be given the opportunity to give a brief speech about the work you have done in the past year. This is a free event and refreshments will be provided for all and their guest speaker will be announced soon he said.

Mr. Fisher said he planned on going because he would like to talk to the other Conservation Commissions and see what they have done with trail work, who they've used and the things that they have done in their areas that we might want to do with the Cartwright property up on Bay Rd. to Spring St. I'm going to go and I recommend anybody else go too it will be fun if you're not working he said.

**Town Forester-** Mr. Fisher said he was still trying to work on getting with the Town Forester to get the contracts redone. He said they had contracts 2 years ago and because of COVID and other circumstances they haven't been able to renew them but Barry Keith is still doing work for us. He said usually it's with the French property conservation area, the Dubois property and the Town Forest and he is hoping before they get these new contracts in- and he is going to talk to Mr. Keith to see if they can get them done in Jan. or Feb., that we have the Cartwright property and we can add that to the contract and just have 1 contract to cover all of our major properties instead of having 3 contracts that expire at different times.

Mr. Fisher said Mr. Keith is still getting the documentation together for the Phase II study of the Cartwright that is required before it can be transferred to us and that needs to be given to the Planning Dept. and they're working with him on that. He said they've already some funds from a grant to get that done so that is all paid for and they're finishing up that little bit. The last thing with the property was the deeds had been looked at, everything has been cleared all the concerns with the outstanding loans and the encroachment on other properties have all been cleared up. They're just trying to get the final authority for signatures from the Cartwright property heirs and the owners of the New Dam project and some land transfers that they were doing within their processes to solidify the areas that are being donated to us. Hopefully it will be completed by the end of the year he said.

Mr. Pollard asked about hunting on the property.

Mr. Fisher said there will be no hunting. He said Mr. Pimental contacted the heirs and their desire is that there will be no hunting so as far as he knows there will be no hunting. He said fishing will be allowed probably but no hunting or trapping. He said he didn't know if that has come before the Selectmen again yet.

Mr. Vachon said it hasn't come back after the first time that's why those e-mails when out. Mr. Fisher said they still have to see what the Selectmen say but he didn't think it would be sticking point but it was the heirs understanding that there would be no hunting or trapping.

**7). New Members Needed:**

Mr. Fisher said as always they need new members and what you see here is what they've got and they should have 7 full members plus a Selectmen's representative and 2 alternates. He said they need 4 members present for a quorum in order to hold meetings and conduct business like they did tonight for Eversource and take care of all the other things they need to do. He said they are almost at a critical stage where they can't hold meetings so please consider giving some of your time and join the Conservation Commission.

He said the other boards in the community too, the Budget Committee, the Economic Development Committee, they're all looking for members and it's a critical time for them. Please think about joining some of the committees as that is how we get our business done and that's how we improve Farmington. We need your help he said.

**8). Member Comments:** None

**9). Upcoming Dates:** Next Meeting: January 11, 2024 at 6 p.m.

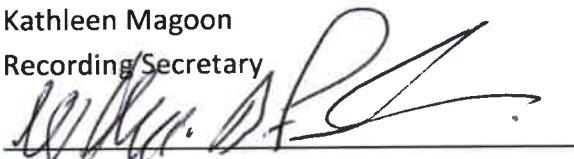
Mr. Fisher said if anybody out there is curious about the Con Com to please attend one of their meetings. He said the Cartwright project is a big project coming up and there is all kinds of work there-trails, a parking lot, and kiosks and make that a great destination spot for surrounding towns and a place for the people of Farmington to take their families out and have a good time. He said the Cocheco River runs thru there and it is stocked yearly by the state and it would be a good fishing area and maybe in the future a handicapped access fishing spot. We need people to help us get it there he said.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the people of Farmington and please be safe and have fun with your families. Be nice guys, Santa Claus is watching he said.

**10). Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (Ballou, second Hall) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 6:37 p.m.

Kathleen Magoon  
Recording Secretary



William "Bill" Fisher, Chairman