

The Webster Conservation Commission met via Zoom on Wednesday, March 10th. The meeting was opened at 7:03 P.M. by CC Chair Dan Moran who read aloud the required executive order to meet electronically, etc. etc.

CC Members Present: Dan Moran, Chair. Secretary for the meeting Betsy Janeway. and Susan Roman, Linda Clark, Michele Tremblay, Sally Embley, Mary Jo MacGowan, Isabel Brintnall, and Chris Schadler.

Members of the Webster Planning Board present: Sue Rauth, Craig Fournier.

SelectBoard member Dave Heminway attended.

Wetland Scientist Rick Van der Poll attended, by invitation.

Reappointments of members Janeway, Clark, and Embley will need to be made at the next meeting of the Select Board.

Mr. Van der Poll was introduced and asked to comment upon the proposed draft wetlands protection ordinance. His comments and advice for the ordinance were clear and helpful.

"What's challenging," he added, "is the public understanding of the ordinance." He approved of the amendments to the Vernal Pools section, and said that the ordinance should use the NH State's definition of vernal pools. He warned that Section V.1.b. about wetlands hydrologically connected "gets tricky." If wetlands are "significant," they should be connected. But has the word "significant" been defined? This part needs to be reworded, he warned.

Mr van der Poll explained the differences between the U.S Army Corps of Engineers Highway Method of assigning wetland functions and the NH Methods functions. Section V.1.d including vernal pools is inconsistent. He continued to review the ordinance and give advice, and there was a spirited discussion of timber operations that, he said, "have contributed to the worst and the most impactful degradation of surface waters in the state." He ended his remarks with agreeing with Section 10.C.1.3. that states the Conservation Commission should be allowed to inspect the property in question.

Mr. Van der Poll was thanked by the WCC, and he left at 8:12 P.M..

Select Board member Dave Heminway said, "Whatever we come up with (for a wetlands protection ordinance) must be both useful and enforceable, or it will fail."

Craig Fournier commented that loggers are not unreasonable people. Michele Tremblay added that "we ought to ask the District Forester to talk with Webster's loggers, as a good first step."

The Olivewood Solar project was discussed. A new map will be available March 11th and will identify the area where the solar panels may be placed, and show how close they would be to wetlands, and give the reasoning for the specific locations. Burns & MacDonald will provide the map. "Dom" and Michael from Olivewood will attend the next meeting of the solar project subcommittee.

But a serious problem has arisen: the large clearcut on Deer Meadow Road was concluded with the burial of all of the tree stumps by the landowner's father, with a bulldozer. This is a "geotechnical consideration:" The stumps will in time rot, and change the stability of the land beneath the solar panels, causing the panels to become unstable. It must be made clear that future instability of the solar panels will not be blamed upon the Town of Webster or affect the established PILOT agreement.

Mr. Heminway discussed the PILOT agreement, and said it is yet unsigned.

Everyone agreed that it was late, and the remaining agenda items must be taken up at the next WCC meeting, on April 14th. These agenda items are about the proposed Code Enforcement Officer, the proposed gravel pit on DustinRoad, Town property easements, and a consideration of the Blackwater River being designated in the Rivers Protection Program.

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:12 P.M.

Minutes taken by Betsy Janeway