Franconia Conservation Commission (FCC)

Meeting: June 13, 2017, 8:00 AM

Members present: Kim Cowles, Chris Nicodemus, Jill Brewer, Mary Grote, Red McCarthy, Ginny Jeffryes, Mark Ober

Guests: Gregg and Karen Weiskerger of Fransted Campground (for initial portion of meeting), Dawn Steele

Beavers – remain active at upper-most dam at the Lawrence Forest. Lower dam with the leveling drain pipe is dry, pipe sitting on dry ground. Mark says if intervention required, only options are trapping or installing another pipe. Gregg thinks no one knows the appropriate water level without hiring a hydrologist. Gregg reiterates his concerns that if dam were suddenly breached, it would be a risk to safety of campers and could damage campground. Chris says the river’s edge location of the campsites will always be at flash flood risk due to the nearby high mountain terrain which the watershed drains, beavers or not. Greg says they have evacuation plans for predictable storms. Karen wants the beavers trapped and moved.

The city of Merrimack’s Beaver Management Plan, which Dawn Steele located, has names of people who install pipes. Moving the existing pipe into the current dam might be an option. Greg agrees to contact the installers named in the Merrimack document to gather information about cost and availability.

Chris, Kim, and Rebecca Brown were at the site 2 days ago, leading a public walk of the land. Red also viewed it last week and says there isn’t much water there – he estimates 2 acre feet of water storage behind the dam. He doesn’t think it is a hazard.

Mark says it isn’t a problem that needs fixing. It’s far enough upstream. He doesn’t think we should do anything with the beavers, not even a pipe. He assesses a lot of beaver complaints for Fish and Game, and this is not a threat; the beavers are where they are supposed to be. General discussion that the Weiskergers are overly worried, and this is likely to be ongoing.

Mark will ask the area Fish and Game biologist to come look at the dam, if available. Chris will phone a National Forest person who was on the culvert project to see if they can look at it. Once Greg has contacted the Merrimack installers, we will decide on whether to do it to lower the water level a foot below height of top. Campground needs to pay for it.

Red points out that beaver dams are actually good flood control. Also beaver dams are very well made. They are better flood control than they are a flood risk. Well known in engineering circles, and for example years past, the Soil Conservation Service mimicked beaver dams for construction.

If we decide on a pipe to lower water level, discussion on whether we should consider installing ourselves, with no one being willing at this point. Chris moves that none of the CC members will physically install the mitigation pipe. Jill seconds. Motion unanimously passes.

Profile Lake walkway project – We finalized the letter opposing it to send to DES as commentary on the wetlands application. To print on Conservation Commission letter head today, and mail. Discussion of a recent Courier letter to the editor in favor which wasn’t accurate in multiple points, written by Jim Alden.

Jill wrote a draft of letter to Gov Sununu about supporting the Paris Climate Agreement. Jill presented letter to us. She moves that we send the letter urging Governor Sununu to join the United States Climate Alliance. Red seconds. Motion unanimously passes.

Defer approval of past minutes to next meeting.

Tuesday July 25 8 a.m.