



FARMINGTON RIVER COORDINATING COMMITTEE

100 East River Road – Squire’s Tavern

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Minutes of Regular FRCC Meeting

Monday, August 20, 2012

Squire’s Tavern

100 East River Road, Pleasant Valley

Present: Roger Behrens (Barkhamsted Alt); Dan Bowler (Hartland Rep); Eileen Fielding (FRWA Alt/Treasurer); Liz Lacy (NPS/FRCC Director); Mark Lindquist (New Hartford Alt); Nick Masi (FRAA Rep); Alison Murdock (New Hartford Rep/Vice Chair); Susan Peterson (CT DEEP Rep/Secretary); David Sinish (FRWA Rep)

Guests: Alicea Charamut (Farmington Valley TU); John Forker (Bristol Farms); Jeremy Harraden (Farmington River Tubing)

- 1. Call to Order:** Lacy called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. (Chair Robinson unable to attend, and Murdock only just elected to Vice Chair)
- 2. New Business:** Forker and Harraden were invited to speak first with regard to their concerns pertaining to private tubers, alcohol, trash, parking, etc. along the West Branch and Farmington River between the Route 219 bridge in New Hartford and the Route 202 bridge in Canton. Forker noted that he is the husband of Cherie Robinson, FRCC Chair. Robinson had suggested he attend an FRCC meeting to express his concerns.

Forker is one of the 12 family-related owners of Bristol Farms. They meet monthly and have an annual meeting. Bristol Farms owns land in Canton adjacent to the river and Route 44 and has been allowing tubers to take-out at this location. However, parking, traffic and trash problems are getting out of control and Bristol Farms is leaning towards no longer allowing tubers to take-out on their property because of these issues as well as liability concerns. To complicate matters, there is some confusion over property ownership due to other claims made by CT DOT, NU and MDC which makes even posting “no trespassing” signs difficult. Forker echoed Harraden’s concerns below. He added that he does not have issues with the canoeists, kayakers or fishermen who use the river.

Harraden operates the Farmington River Tubing concession at Satan’s Kingdom in New Hartford which is a state recreational area managed by CT DEEP. He has been working with Forker to try to address the problems at the Bristol Farms take-out. Harraden and his staff have also spent a lot of time picking up trash along the river. He is particularly concerned about the behavior of many private tubers who put in at Satan’s Kingdom and on other sections of the river. Harraden estimates that approximately 50% of private tubers access the river through Satan’s Kingdom. Harraden has a strictly enforced policy that does not allow his customers to bring either alcohol or glass containers with them on the river. However, he has no control over private tubers who put in at Satan’s Kingdom and elsewhere who bring coolers full of alcohol and/or glass containers with them. The use of alcohol has resulted in inappropriate behavior on the river, and glass bottles have been discarded and broken. A number of Harraden’s customers and staff have experienced serious foot lacerations as a result of broken glass in the river. Although Harraden hires local and State police on the weekends to assist with his tubing operation, they are not able to do anything with regard to private users. Harraden is wondering if a law or local ordinance can be passed that bans the use of alcohol and glass on the river. The problem cannot be controlled when there is no authority for enforcement action. Harraden thought FRCC might be able to help address these problems because of the river’s Wild & Scenic designation and the role of the committee to protect and enhance the river and its recreational use. Harraden presented a letter which requests FRCC’s assistance in addressing these problems.

FRCC discussion during and after Forker’s and Harraden’s presentation of the issue included the following comments:

- Town can’t control private property trespassing issues;
- MDC and NU should be contacted as they may be able to help;

- FRCC could bring relevant parties together at a meeting to discuss;
- There have been similar issues on the river in the past, and there may already be a mechanism in place at the State or local level to address situation;
- State boat launch ramps have signs with requirements but there is a problem with enforcement; More enforcement needed by CT DEEP;
- FRCC is the right place to start because towns, CT DEEP, MDC and others are already represented;
- The timing is good to pursue this issue before next season;
- Photos and/or video portraying the issue would be helpful – including photos of foot lacerations from glass;
- Need to identify how signage, volunteers, etc. may help address problem;
- Need to determine what statutes, regulations, etc. are currently in place;

At the conclusion of the discussion, Lindquist noted that FRCC understands and supports the concerns expressed. Forker and Harraden said they would be available to attend future meetings. Lacy said she would scan a copy of Harraden’s letter and circulate it to FRCC members.

(NOTE – The issue was discussed further later in meeting. See “New Business/Other”.)

3. Approval of Minutes of June 18, 2012 and July 16, 2012 meetings:

The June 18, 2012 meeting minutes were approved with the following changes:

- p. 3 – Under “New Business/Other” – “DPW Spraying” - Change first sentence to read: “Sinish said that Canton DPW has been considering spraying ...” (emphasis added)

(NOTE: With regard to the above referenced meeting notes, Murdock added that shortly after she mentioned that New Hartford was not spraying, the Town started using spray again. Lacy noted that Betsy Corrigan is working with DOT and they are doing some spraying for invasives.)

After the meeting, Peterson caught the following error in the minutes that also needs to be corrected:

- p. 1 – Change “Approval of Minutes of August 15, 2011 meeting” to read: “Approval of Minutes of May 21, 2012 meeting” (emphasis added)

The July 16 2012 meeting minutes were approved.

After the meeting, Peterson caught the following error in the minutes that needs to be corrected:

- p. 1 – Change “Approval of Minutes of June 18, 2011” meeting” to read: “Approval of Minutes of meeting June 18, 2012” (emphasis added)

4. Treasurer’s Reports: Fielding presented the following two reports from the copies provided at this and the previous meeting:

As of July 11, 2012, the new checking account balance was \$7,913.29; and the new scholarship fund balance was \$1,522.21. She noted that funds were taken out of the two different scholarship accounts (Johnson and Keener) for the two recent recipients. In addition, the Northwest Conservation District was reimbursed for the installation of the two stormwater bmps in Winchester that were part of the FRWA Still River project.

As of August 13, 2012, the new checking account balance was \$9,850.52; and the new scholarship fund balance was \$1,522.21. Things have been relatively quiet since the last report. FRCC received the final bit of funding under the last cooperative agreement from NPS. Expenses for this time period were for phones and goat invasive services.

(NOTE: Per NPS, a new accounting system is going to be used, starting with the new fiscal year which begins this Fall.)

5. Old Business:

Resource Stewardship – Lacy led the updates in the absence of Tim Anthony, Subcommittee Chair

Hartland Build-Out Analysis – The focus of the last subcommittee meeting was a presentation by Jeff Bolton regarding the “Build-Out Analysis for the Town of Hartland” which FRWA did under a FRCC grant to the Hartland Land Trust (HLT). The subcommittee was impressed with the work that FRWA has done on the project. However, there is an issue which needs to be addressed. FRWA feels it has done all the work expected on the project, according to their understanding of the contract. Meanwhile, HLT has a different understanding of the contract and would like FRWA to do some additional work on the project. The subcommittee felt the best solution might be to consider some extra funding for a “Phase II” of the project to address HLT’s additional requests.

Education and Outreach – Sinish, Subcommittee Chair, led the updates:

The subcommittee met on July 13.

Barkhamsted 4th of July Parade – Discussed reaction to FRCC float and what can be done to make it better next year. Would like to get more people walking and also develop an informational hand-out.

Management Plan Update – Provided some language change suggestions.

Social Media – Have switched from “Constant Contact” to “Mail Chimp” which is free. Murdock noted that we need to have more people “like” us on our Facebook page.

Interns – Have been working out well with regard to several E&O projects:

- Jessica Applin is working on a series of postcards to river front landowners to hook them up with the FRCC e-newsletter, and to invite them to the Open House;
- Jessica also is reworking some language and graphics for the Junior River Ranger program;
- Katie Donovan has been working on a database to maintain the acreages, volunteer hours and other data for the invasives management project with Hannah Beach;
- Katie has also been distributing maps and brochures.

FRCC Sign for Squire’s Tavern - Lindquist will construct sign and Canton Sign Shop will do lettering. Sign will spell out “FRCC” and provide FRCC website and Wild & Scenic logo. Committee would like to have the sign hanging on the Squire’s porch by the October 18 Open House.

Open House – Will be October 18; 4:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

- Lacy has flyers for people to hand-out or post;
- Format to be the same as last year:
 - Committee members will provide food and drink;
 - Need help with set-up and clean-up;
- Travelin’ Trout will provide music;
- Goats will be on-hand;
- Sinish and his mother will provide flowers;
- Lacy is getting word out to artists;
- Mario Santoro would like to create a Facebook “event” for the Open House.

Executive – Lacy led the updates in the absence of Cherie Robinson, Subcommittee Chair

Colebrook Representatives – Colebrook representative, Tom Stanton, and alternate representative, Edna Travis, have resigned. We now have two vacancies on FRCC for Colebrook. Lacy will contact the Town of Colebrook regarding appointing new representatives. Suggestions for trying to find new people interested in serving on FRCC:

- Mention in next e-newsletter;
- FRWA can check it’s database;
- John Anderson (Aton Forest) may have suggestions.

New Vice Chair – Edna Travis had been serving as FRCC Vice Chair. Due to her resignation, a new Vice Chair was needed. Murdock was nominated, and accepted the Vice Chair position.

(NOTE: Vote was done by e-mail, initially sent by Lacy on August 15, 2012)

Management Plan Update – Working on last “tweaks” on draft before it goes out to FRCC towns, etc. for review. The goal is to have a public draft finished for public viewing at the Open House.

6. **New Business/Other:**

Recreational Issues - Discussion of the tubing issue presented by Forker and Harraden at the beginning of the meeting continued. Additional comments:

- This is an opportunity to educate people who may be new to the river; Consider using “educational approach” to address issue;
- There are some flagrant violations and ethics issues to consider here;
- FRWA could play an important role with regard to this issue;
- FRWA can help bring stakeholders together;
- Need to come up with collaborative solution;
- Need to write an issues statement;
- Will education work? Most people know they shouldn’t do these things;
- Need to define regulations;
- Need good signage which would allow for self-policing;

It was agreed that a committee should be formed to look into the issue further. Sinish, Bowler, Masi, Fielding and Peterson said they would participate on a committee with Lacy. Lacy said she would put a conference call together.

Fielding said that she will have a UConn intern for the Fall who could potentially do some initial research on existing laws, regulations, etc. Committee members thought this would be helpful. Fielding will ask the intern if she would be interested in a project of this type. Sinish felt that the project should be done in a controlled manner. Fielding added that FRCC should check and make sure that Forker and Harraden are okay with this approach since they brought up the issue.

Charamut commented that nine bags of trash had been removed from a downstream area during a recent clean-up. Trash collected included: coolers, beer cans, flip flops, etc. Fielding said it would also be good to do a community poll to find out how many people are “quietly” cleaning up this type of trash on their own – not as part of a group.

7. **Town (and Other Committee Member and Guest) Reports:**

Barkhamsted – Behrens reported that an ordinance to prohibit feeding bears had been rejected. Colebrook had recently passed such an ordinance.

8. **Next meeting dates:**

- **Full Committee Meetings:** Sept. 17; Oct. 18 – Open House from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m.
- **Subcommittee Meetings:**
 - **E&O** – Sept. 4 at 7:00 p.m. – location TBD; Oct. 9 at 7:00 p.m. – location TBD;
 - **RS** – Sept. 4 at 4:00 p.m. at Squire’s; Oct. 9 at 4:00 p.m. – location TBD

9. **Adjourn:** 8:54 p.m.