

# Windham Forestry Committee

## MEETING MINUTES – DRAFT

Friday, December 5, 2014

### ATTENDANCE:

Wanda Rice – Chair  
Norman Babineau – Vice Chair  
Holly Hanford Oliver – Secretary (excused)  
Wayne Morris – Conservation Commission  
James Finn – Conservation Commission

Meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m.

### DISCUSSION:

Norm volunteered to provide today's meeting minutes.

Review of 10/17/14 meeting minutes. Wayne did not recall an official motion to wait until after the Board of Selectmen discussion before scheduling a follow-up meeting with the BOS, Conservation Commission, and Forestry Committee to discuss which town entity manages town forest properties. Norm verified his notes showed a vote of 5-0-0 to wait before scheduling any additional meetings. On 10/20/14 the BOS and Dave Sullivan discussed options for who should manage town forest lands. It was decided that no changes are needed at this time, town forest properties will be managed by the current Forestry Committee. Additional meetings with all parties can be scheduled if needed in the future. Wayne motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Jim seconded. Motion approved 4-0-0.

Reviewed and discussed proposals for forest management of the South-Eastern Properties. Discussed the proposals received from BayState Forestry and Charles Moreno. Proposals based on different methods of payment. BSF charges by the acres harvested, and CM was by hours worked. Both proposals covered our bid specifications but using different plans to achieve our goals. BSF has all work in one phase. CM has the work completed in two phases and includes a "woods road". Billing payments methods varied between the two proposals, but either would be acceptable. BSF has prior knowledge of the properties and developed the current forestry plan. BSF had a prior work order through the Conservation Commission for this work, and Wayne felt it was somewhat unfair to be re-bidding as BSF has been waiting over two years to start the project, and his charges did not increase in his new proposal. Both foresters are well qualified and reputable, other distinctions are minor in nature. BSF's prior knowledge of the property, including authoring of the forest management plan for the property, and their fixed per acre charging structure gives them the edge in some minds. Wayne made a motion to approve the BSF proposal for a bio-mass harvest of the South-Eastern Properties. Jim seconded. Both responders are competent but Jim preferred BSF due to their prior work

on this project. Motion approved 3-1-0. Norm was opposed, and preferred CM's proposal. Wanda will notify Dave of our selection.

Board of Selectmen requested a recommendation from the Forestry Committee on town owned parcel 8-A-9010 for possible designation as "town forest" land. Norm and Wanda walked the property. (full report available separately) It's .6 acres in size, and has only a few large old growth pines that might be harvestable. Access is only available through private property. Wanda reviewed the details of her report based on the site visit. Wayne mentioned that the location on Seavey Pond would indicate it should be left as is to protect the pond. Jim made a motion to recommend to the BOS that this property 8-A-9010 is not viable as town forest land. Seconded by Norm. Motion approved 4-0-0.

Board of Selectmen requested a recommendation from the Forestry Committee on town owned parcel 6-C-200 for possible designation as "town forest" land. Wanda and Norm walked the property. (full report available separately) It's relatively small lot of 13 acres with wetlands through the center. The class 6 road along this property was discontinued by town vote in 2014 complicating access. Wayne discussed wetland setbacks and sloping topology of the property. Wanda feels this property is border-line as a town forest and would require a professional forester evaluation to determine if it would be viable to harvest. There is no access from Pine Hill Road, the best access seems to be from Sheffield Road. The town and abutter of the discontinued portion of Pine Hill Road each now own "half" the road and would need agreement to use the each other's portion. Opening up the woodland for pine regeneration along the new development area would require removal of significant overstory trees affecting the buffer area along the new development. Norm made a motion to recommend to the BOS that a licensed forester evaluate the property for harvesting viability at a cost of \$75-\$150. There was no second for the motion. Wayne is concerned with harvesting along the wetland areas. Jim made a motion to recommend to the BOS that lot 6-C-200 would not be viable as town forest land due to the small size, extensive wetland areas, questionable stumpage value, and limited access. Motion approved 3-1-0. Norm was opposed as he would like to get more information from a forester on the possible viability of harvesting this parcel. Wanda will summarize our recommendations for the BOS.

Jim Fricchioni a resident of Bayberry Road attended the meeting and it was agreed to have a discussion around his proposal to be a volunteer town forest steward of the South-Eastern Properties. Jim first requested clarification of the harvesting process and how the wood is valued. He discussed the possibility of the town providing forest products directly to town residents. A brief discussion on the overall harvest process was discussed. It's not practical to have small harvest solely for town residents to purchase wood for personal use. Bob Coole, town resident, requested clarification on how the timber taxes are handled. Typically the town waives the tax because it is also the owner of the property. Jim Finn is concerned with liability of private citizens cutting wood on town property. Norm's research indicates the state provides liability protection to owners that allow timber cutting on their property for personal use similar to the protections for allowing hunters to use the property. Norm is fully in favor of having a designated town forest steward that could help maintain trails, pick up trash, etc. Any wood removed from the trail could be harvested for their personal use. The duties of the steward would include proper safety precautions to protect the public during any work. Wayne suggested Jim go directly to Dave Sullivan for designation as an "official town volunteer" with approval from the Forestry Committee and/or BOS as needed. Wanda wants to limit the scope of the stewardship to trail maintenance only, as the rest of the forest is being managed under a professional forestry plan. A discussion ensued around the use of motorized vehicle on town

property and how to best educate the public that they are not an allowed usage. Bob Coole suggested Jim should start with Dave S. for a volunteer status, as it may require liability insurance coverage. Jim will go to Dave with our endorsement and next steps. Jim agreed to update the committee once a year with the status of the forest trails and general forest conditions or issues. Wayne mentioned a new easement has been acquired from Copps Hill Road to the town forest property and would be future access.

Next meeting date scheduled for January 16, 2015 1:00 pm.

Bob Coole brought to our attention that he is starting a petition for a warrant article to move the Forestry Committee under the Conservation Commission jurisdiction. Mr. Coole feels that the two entities are doing the same job. The Committee thanked him for the advanced notification. Wayne added that the current structure is working fine and that Forestry and Conservation are working hand in hand to protect town resources.

There was additional discussion regarding another piece of town owned property, 14-A-230 scheduled for sale by the BOS. This property borders Beaver Brook, town conservation land, and State owned property. Consensus was that this property should be retained by the town and designated as conservation land due to its location along Beaver Brook.

Norm and Wanda provided a brief overview of the "Forest Laws for Municipal Officials" seminar, sponsored by the University of New Hampshire, that they attended on 11/18/2014. A lot of good information was presented by UNH Cooperative Extension, Dept. Revenue Admin., Forest Rangers, NH Municipal Assoc., and NH Timber Owner Association. Handouts were made available to other committee members for review.

Wayne was concerned that the clear cutting along Route 28 does not appear to have followed the proper timber harvest guidelines, but a subsequent review by state officials found no violation due to a planned change of use within 180 days.

Norm made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Wayne. Motion approved 4-0-0.  
Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

## Recommendations on Town owned parcels by Windham Forestry Committee as requested by the Board of Selectmen

Town of Windham Property: lot 6-C-200

Location: Abutting Pine Hill Road (former Class VI road) with a lot corner at the edge of Sheffield Road.

This property consists of 13 acres of woods and wetlands. There is access to the property from Sheffield Road. The property is bordered on 3 sides by stone walls. From Sheffield Road, the property slopes downward from 340' elevation down to 300' in the wetland area. The wetland area is open and characterized by wetland species such as cattails and grasses and takes up roughly one quarter of the property. There are remnants of old beaver dams. The larger tree species at the top of the property near Sheffield Road are primarily red & black oak and mostly 10" or less in diameter and of poor quality. There is a significant understory of Eastern White Pine regeneration and pole size trees in this area. Slightly further down the slope, there are quite a few large Eastern White Pines and Red Oaks. Some of these trees are of a size and quality to provide some nice sawlogs. There is a significant amount of white pine regeneration and pole size white pine throughout this part of property. Other species present in the overstory are black oak, white oak, red maple, and hickory.

There are several factors working against making this property a town forest. The former Class VI portion of Pine Hill Road could have provided good access for a logging operation to get across the wetland, but it was discontinued in the 2014 town election. Although there is some high value timber on part of the property, given the small size of the property it is probable there is simply not enough of it to conduct a viable logging operation there. Given the lack of age classes, a harvest would probably take out a significant portion of the overstory in order to release the regeneration. This would mean it would be many decades before another harvest could be conducted. Our committee discussed all these factors at our December 5, 2014 meeting and voted *not* to recommend this property for Town Forest status.

Town of Windham Property: lot 8-A-9010

Location: Near the end of Seavey Road, on the shore of Seavey Pond.

This property consists of .6 acres of woods and is bordered on 3 sides by the lake. There is no access to this property without crossing private land or the pond. There are only 3-4 trees on this property that would be worth harvesting. Therefore timber management is not a viable option for this land and it is not a viable town forest.