

Minutes for FRANKLIN WATERSHED COMMITTEE December 11, 2008

A meeting of the Franklin Watershed Committee, Inc. (FWC) was held at the Franklin Homestead, Franklin, Vt.

Officers Present: President - Jim Cameron, Sue Clark, Treasurer

Also present were: David Breed, Paul Stanley, Dick Benton, Nancy Magnant, Pauline Favreau, Lucille Rainville, James Dewing, Wayne Fiske, Rolland Rainville, Ron Paradis, Peter Kittell, Dan Larivee, Greg Bouchard, Chris Wagner, Craig Rainville, and Richard Boudreau.

Cameron called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. He welcomed the audience and introduced moderator, Mr. Glenn Rogers from the University of Vermont Extension Service. Rogers is a Regional Farm Management Specialist with several years of experience with the local farming community. Rogers started out the meeting by having everyone introduce themselves and to state what their interest was in the Franklin Watershed.

Cameron provided a brief history of the FWC and highlighted recent accomplishments including registering with the State of Vermont, completing the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Lake Carmi, obtaining a sizable 319 grant, applying for non-profit status, and hiring a Coordinator.

Rogers guided the discussion which touched on local history and nostalgia of the Lake and surrounding region, water quality in decades past, changes in local practices and landscape.

One point of great interest was the past governmental practice of distributing phosphorus to farmers for application to their land.

The conversation also covered suspected causes of phosphorus loading in the lake. Points of concern included erosion, manure handling, runoff from road applications, and septic systems. Many present felt poorly functioning septic systems on lake front property were a very serious issue.

Glen Rogers brought the discussion toward suggested uses for the grant funding. Many suggested time and money be focused on the septic issue; starting with educational material and or lectures for the campers focusing on good communication. Due to the limited funding for this purpose, a demonstration project to be used as a role model for future upgrades was considered. Cameron noted the information examined at the previous meeting regarding new technology for community septics which could accommodate several residences. He made all present aware of the work session planned for January 12 at 10:00am which would focus on this topic, as well as the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting on the 8th and the planning session on February 7th which would focus on the agricultural issue.

The conversation turned to a brainstorming session for applications of the portion of the funding designated for agricultural purposes. Wayne Fisk suggested that this limited funding also be applied to the septic issue since there are other funding sources available to farmers for agricultural issues. David Breed explained the requirements of the grant prevent this shift in focus. Cameron provided information from past research which listed septic as contributing approximately 2% of total phosphorus load. Despite this fact, consensus opinion was that septic is an issue that cannot be ignored for practical and political reasons.

Jim Dewing expressed frustration with communication with the board in the past. He has been reported to the state on numerous occasions while attempting to make improvement at his site that would reduce his impact on the watershed. Dewing said when he moved stones to create rip-rap along the banks of the stream to limit erosion he had been reported to the state. He expressed his disappointment and lack of interest to apply his own funds to finishing the project. This project was considered as the next possible step for the group.

Chris Wagner also expressed a desire to make further improvements to his farm and a willingness to work with the FWC to achieve this goal. However, Wagner noted his hesitation to move forward on these projects if there are strings attached. Wagner feared such contribution by the FWC might lead to feelings of entitlement from the group.

It was mentioned many times during the meeting that good communication will be critical to achieve the goals of the group. Heidi Britch-Valenta offered to work with farmers to gather information for publication in the newsletter to supply knowledge to readers on various projects. Britch-Valenta also offered to assist farmers in finding information on new programs, funding or technology as well as assisting in the application process.

Glenn Rogers reminded everyone that the grant money was to be used for three main purposes, septic system maintenance and evaluation, Shoreland management, and improving agricultural practices. Rogers clarified that everyone present for the meeting was a member of the FWC and that they all had a voice. The group is open to all members of the community.

NEXT REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING IS JANUARY 8TH AT 7:00PM

WORKING SESSION ON JANUARY 10TH AT 10:00AM- SEPTIC ISSUES

WORKING SESSION FEBRUARY 7TH AT 10:00AM – AGRICULTURAL ISSUE

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING FEBRUARY 12TH AT 7:00PM

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Benton & Heidi Britch-Valenta

Note: These minutes are not final until approved at the next Watershed Meeting.