



Gilmanton Conservation Commission

PO Box 550

Gilmanton NH 03237-0550

REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, August 10, 2010 at 7:00 p.m., Academy Building, Gilmanton

Present: Sue Hale-de-Seve, Nanci Mitchell, Dick de Seve, Tracy Tarr (Chair), Laurie Churchill, Erin Hollingsworth, Patrick Hackley

Absent: Joe Derrick

- A. The Belmont Conservation Commission (BCC) provided a presentation to the Gilmanton Conservation Commission (GCC) to discuss the history of biosolid ordinance development in the Town of Belmont. Tracy Tarr introduced the presenters from the BCC, Ken Knowlton and Carol Fairfield. Ken prefaced his presentation by explaining the situation that existed in Belmont, where the Planning Board asked the BCC to do the research on biosolids as a possible ordinance. They took six months to do the research, hold public meetings and present their findings. Discussion ensued as of what goes into biosolids, what they are and how they are applied. Sources of biosolids include residential areas, hospitals and industrial land uses. Biosolids are treated sludge. Class A has no detectable pathogens and Class B has a reduced level of pathogens. Concerns in Belmont were raised over the pathogens in Class B biosolids. The current required testing can easily miss heavy loading “events”. Biosolids may cause respiratory problems and chronic disease, and pollutants found in biosolids may be incorporated into plants and animals grazing on toxic land. Several human deaths have also been informally linked to sludge application. Farmers may also be impacted as no two loads have the same composition of chemicals or pathogens. Farmers could also be liable for litigation due to exposure. Sludge as fertilizer may reduce crop production after several years. Sludge may include metals and toxicants including arsenic, cadmium, copper (higher in biosolids), lead*, mercury*, molybdenum*, nickel (higher in biosolids), and zinc (higher in biosolids).

Alternative uses to sludge could be considered including fuel for vehicles and home heating, and construction materials like asphalt, concrete, cement, bricks, and aggregate. Bottom line on biosolids: “EPA cannot assure the public that current land application practices are protective of human health and the environment”. Some towns with outright bans include Alton, Barnstead, Bridgewater, Brookfield, and Farmington (see attachment that Belmont gave to GCC). The most cost-effective solution for Belmont to prevent potential risks of sludge was to ban biosolid applications (both Class A & Class B). Belmont had a very good cross section of people who spent hours of research and looked at both sides of the issue. Some of the items behind the thought processes: DES regulates parameters four times a year and uses RMI to dispose of the biosolid. RMI can give biosolids to farmers for free, and sometimes even pay farmers to spread it. The fact is that something needs to be done with biosolids, but many sources are against using it. In the last 5 years e-coli breakouts have come from vegetable crops. Did they apply sludge? Sludge may also be associated with cyanobacteria outbreaks.

*Gilmanton Conservation Commission
August 10, 2010
Approved September 14, 2010*

In Belmont, the concern over biosolids was unanimous. The BCC voted, and the Town of Belmont voted to put the issue on the ballot to let the voters decide. There were two ballot questions: 1. No sewer sludge and 2. The application to apply sewer sludge. The ban won overwhelmingly. Tracy asked if the BCC would have done anything differently now that they can look back. The BCC suggested to focus or aim the subject at the issue, not the companies who work in this arena. The BCC did not hear from the farmers regarding the actual savings they incurred using sludge versus using conventional manure. One farmer had a permit and another farmer was in the process of applying for a permit. The previous farmer's permit was granted, while the new farmer's was not granted. The Town of Belmont felt they would lose local control if they did not have an ordinance in place. Leading scientists were saying "we just don't know". Sand pits could open a big door for the spreading of biosolids for reclamation. They were advised not to ask for a total ban. Belmont put the facts out there, gave many presentations, gave documents, and it was decided among everyone to go for the ban, put it on the ballot, and reach out to townspeople for their decision. After investigating the issue, several farmers decided they did not want to use sludge on their lands.

There was a public hearing about a month before the actual vote. They had a public awareness campaign. Former commission members did the campaign between the public hearings and the voting. Did they speak to some of the towns that were on the fence? No, there was not enough time.

For more information, Caroline Snyder is a great resource. She has a PhD. Members of the BCC are an excellent resource for information as well. A local farmer is still going to use cow manure, but is looking to replace the chemical fertilizer with the sludge. Crops increase for six or seven years with sludge but then it begins to decrease. Delmonte, Heinz, and General Mills cereal will not buy products from any State that uses sludge. Similar to DDT, there were no issues initially, but could sludge be similar to this? The Keith Forrester article on heavy metals in wastewater suggests that the levels in sludge are far more toxic than what is safe. There is little knowledge and little control. Ken indicated that the BCC opted to air on the side of conservancy because there is too much unknown.

Belmont has a significant aquifer resource. The public can buy Class A at places like Home Depot (milorganite). BCC recommended no spreading of Class A & Class B. Did it state on the ballot that the BCC recommended the "no spreading"? Yes. This could be perceived as a help to people who personally have had no time to become aware of all the issues. Even within DES itself there are opposing viewpoints on sludge. For example, algae blooms can be caused by too much fertilizer. Sludge could add to these kinds of issues. Pathogens could crop back up after eight months. It was suggested to put the credentials of the GCC into the equation to add to the credibility of the information that may be provided by the GCC, or the sources that are being cited, such as peer review journals. There remains a lot of questions and uncertainty. There are opposing views. Long term effects are to be determined. What about sludge that migrates from where it is staged versus where it would run off to, due to wind, rain, airborne and various other weather conditions?

Two abutters attended to hear the presentation. After hearing questions from the audience, Patrick suggested that the GCC invite a town that has some restrictions (but not an outright ban) if time permits. Tracy suggested reaching out to a variety of farmers for input. Erin suggested that the implications of using either Class A or Class B biosolids may not be apparent to farmers. Once a farmer can't use Class A anymore because of the pH of the soil, the farmer has to go to Class B. Is this a good thing in the long run?

- B. Minutes from July 20, 2010: Change 7a) from “a motion was made” to “it was agreed” in the draft. Dick made a motion to approve as amended, Nanci seconded and all voted in favor.
- C. Minutes from the July 27, 2010 site walk at the Douglas Isleib property. Patrick made a motion to accept the minutes, Erin seconded it, and all voted in favor. Tracy recused herself from the vote and discussion.
- D. Wetland/Shoreland Applications: PBN for Eriksen etal c/o Grace and Patricia Spaulding to install a concrete anchoring pad for an approved seasonal dock on Shellcamp Pond TM133, Lot 51. Prepared by owner, clerk helped with NHB. Tracy asked for erosion control and top of bank shown. A revised plan was submitted. Nanci moves that the Chair signs and approves the permit by notification and Erin seconded, all voted in favor. Sue and Dick recused themselves from the vote and discussion.
- E. Complaints/Violations/Concerns:
1. Tree cutting (Map 10, Lot 22) on Crystal Lake Rd. Nanci was unsure of whether the observed tree cutting was in compliance with the Shoreland Protection Act (might be). Nanci wrote a draft letter with a summary of the standards and a fact sheet about vegetation in and around the protected shoreline. Erin made a motion for Tracy to sign and Patrick seconded it, all voted in favor.
 2. Tim Warren was approached by a landowner with land next to the Pine Hill Town Forest (Class VI). 20+ computers were dumped on the land. Would a town gate be put on the road? Tim asked Nanci how the GCC felt about this. Nanci: also has badly eroding road. The GCC agreed to approve the gate as long as all that need access to the Town Forest have a way of opening the gate.
 3. Elizabeth Correlle wants to cut a couple of trees next spring on her property. This proposal requires access across a conservation property to gain access to the wood. Nanci is concerned about a broken culvert that is flowing into the road. Lot 409/55(Cogswell Mountain Conservation Area), is owned by Gary and Denise Ambelis. A suggestion could be to leave the road in same or better condition when she leaves. Erosion control measures should be consistent with state recommendations.
 4. Request to log the Perkins farm on August 19, 2010. GCC holds a 15 acre easement deed on this property. Left a copy of the easement plan for Ed Witt (forester). Needs a management plan (a timberland assessment and work order). Lot 409/94. Cutting needs to be done in accordance with a management plan and how it relates to the land abutting the conservation easement. A brief synopsis of management goals was submitted to the GCC.
- F. New Business:
1. The Selectmen copied the Conservation Commission on an e-mail that was sent to the Selectmen in reference to the BMMC Contractor yard on Route 140.
 2. Nanci requested to purchase p-touch tape for a label maker (approximately \$24.00). Dick moved to allow Nanci to make the purchase, Laurie seconded, all voted in favor.

G. Correspondence/Announcements

The Conservation Commission received the most recent Wildlines newsletter from the NHF&G.

H. Upcoming Dates

1. Work Session with the Planning Board (Discussion of Possible Biosolid Ordinance/Aquifer Overlay Districts), Thursday August 12, 2010
2. Next regular Conservation Commission Meeting, Tuesday, September 14, 2010 at 7 pm

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie Churchill".

Laurie Churchill, Secretary