

Barrington Conservation Commission
January 7, 2016 7:00 PM
Early Childhood Learning Center (lower level)
77 Ramsdell Lane, Barrington

PRESENT: John Wallace, Chair
Pam Failing, Vice-chair
Anne Melvin
Dan Ayer, Alternate
Alison Desmarais, Alternate
Susan Gaudiello, Selectmen representative

ABSENT: Ken Grossman
Peter Sandin, Alternate
Glenn Gould, Alternate
Marika Wilde

CALL TO ORDER

Barrington Conservation Commission (BCC) Chair John Wallace called the meeting of December 17, 2015 to order at 7:00.

DELEGATION OF VOTING MEMBERS Chair John Wallace confirmed the presence of members as above. Susan Gaudiello attended the joint meeting as a member of the Selectmen board.

- 1) Public Hearing for the Stonehouse Forest conservation project. This was a joint meeting with the Selectman, the Conservation Commission, and members of the public to discuss use of the Conservation Fund (\$220k) and remaining town conservation bond money (\$230K) towards this project. John Wallace started the meeting by explaining the finances of the Conservation Commission and past conservation projects that had used part of the bond. Duane Hyde from Southeast Land Trust presented the SELT organization and how the Stonehouse Forest project would fit all the purposes of the organization's conservation mission, including providing recreation, water protection, wildlife habitat, and along with Fish and Game, hunting, fishing, and trapping. He shared that Fish and Game had awarded \$750,000 toward the project. With other grants and private donations committed the project is now funded at 50% of cost. With a town contribution of \$450,000 (220K conservation funds, \$230k bond money) the project would be 64% funded. SELT is still submitting grant applications to apply to the

remaining amount needed to be raised. It was explained that the difference between the 2.8 million selling price and 3.3 million acquisition price is the cost of transaction (legal fees, surveying, etc.) and management, including costs for providing public access. The presentation was opened to the public for questions and comments, and the first question was what timber harvesting would involve. Duane explained that any cutting would be for wildlife habitat improvement, not for profit. He mentioned that Fish & Game might want to do New England Cottontail habitat cutting, and this would be patch cuts. There might be cutting around the pond(s) for hardwood regeneration. Fish & Game and SELT will determine what usage is permitted, and Duane explained that ATV use would be prohibited by request of Fish & Game as it is felt that ATV use creates damage and erosion. SELT will be working with the local snowmobile club to establish where snowmobile trails would be allowed. It is still to be determined where public access would be located. SELT will manage trail maintenance. Mr. Vachon stated that he feels the town is out of financial balance, and he would like to wait a year before requesting the money. A number in attendance mentioned the cost benefit to the town of having the property in open space as opposed to having it developed as housing. Duane said that SELT will continue to pay taxes on the property at current use rates. Mr. Thompson pointed out the importance of this area as a water resource as well as the importance of having a large contiguous parcel for wildlife. Pam Failing spoke of the need to act when an opportunity for conservation arises and mentioned how carefully the conservation fund is used.

Anne Melvin made a motion to recommend to the selectmen that the town conservation bond money be used toward the Stonehouse Forest project. Dan Ayer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with a vote of five (5) to zero (0).

Dan Ayer made a motion to use \$220,000 from the Conservation FNOTE: THESE ARE SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES ONLY. A COMPLETE COPY OF THE MEETING AUDIO IS AVAILABLE AT THE LAND USE DEPARTMENT.

fund for the Stonehouse Forest project. Alison Desmariais seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with a vote of five (5) to zero (0) in favor.

With Casey O'Brien making a motion, Fred Bussiere seconding, and a unanimous vote, the selectmen approved the \$230,000 from the conservation bond to go toward the Stonehouse Forest project.

Fred Bussiere made motion to spend \$220,000 from the conservation fund to go toward the Stonehouse Forest project Susan Gaudiello seconded this motion and it passed with a unanimous vote from the Selectmen.

Before the joint meeting ended item item 5 e below (Chestnut Forest open space) was discussed.

The conservation meeting continued after the joint public hearing with the Selectmen. Dan Ayer and Susan Gaudiello attended the Selectmen meeting.

- 2) Other guests: none
- 3) Approval of minutes of December 17th **Pam Failing made a motion to approve the minutes of December 17th as amended. Anne Melvin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with a vote of three (3) to zero (0) in favor** Alison abstained from voting as she was not present at the December 17th meeting.
- 4) Complaints: There was a complaint that ATVs are trashing the Pinkham Rd area of SATWAsR. There was discussion as to what might be done to stop the ATV use, and it was noted that it is posted and gated. At the present time the commission will take no action.
- 5) Old Business
 - a) Conservation Projects:
 - (1) Stonehouse Forest: other project updates
 - b) Calef Isinglass River Preserve
 - i) Parking area & improvement to Town Farm Road for access to Calef Preserve. Updates? John shared that the BCC has received \$1500 from PREP which will go into the conservation fund. Pam will talk with Peter Cook to share ideas on the parking area.
 - c) FEMA remapping of flood zones: update from Anne on information delivered. After compiling work that had been done at the previous meeting (Dec. 17), Anne gave Marcia a listing of areas which the BCC had noted as flood zones. Marcia explained that FEMA is redoing the flood maps for the town, and with newer tools being used the mapping should be more accurate. It was mentioned that a newer flood zone map will be helpful for planning. **Alison Desmarais made a motion to recommend the BCC flood zone list to Marcia. Pam Failing seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with a vote of four (4) to zero (0) in favor.**
 - d) Con Com Facebook page (Glenn)
 - e) Planning Board: this was discussed with the Selectmen at the start of the meeting.
 - i) 17-lot conservation subdivision on Tolend Rd. (Chestnut Forest): Easement or ownership? Results from selectman and PB meetings. Marcia shared that the PB conditionally approved the Chestnut-Forest subdivision. At the Dec. 17 meeting the the BCC discussed the open space and made a made a recommendation to the Selectmen that the town take ownership of the open space. The Selectmen have since voted not to take ownership. — John explained that if the town were to take deed restricted ownership there would be no monitoring expense, but with the town owning a conservation easement there are monitoring expensed involved. A third party (such as SELT) holding the easement does not seem likely, but SELT is willing to look into

this possibility. Another option is to have the homeowners association own the land. There would be a minimal tax revenue from this, and Marcia explained that there would not be a value assessed to the parcel of land itself. There was concern expressed that a homeowners' association could be dissolved. Marcia said that this subdivision will need a homeowners association because of the road frontage parcel. Dawn Hatch would like to know what would be allowed on the land if the town owns it, and a member of the public asked if it were possible to have a well put on it in the future. John Scruton asked that the BCC provide a listing of all the options for the open space. It was decided that before any other recommendation are made the BCC would like to walk the property. John will send out possible dates for the walk to BCC members.

f) Easement monitoring (Ken)

g) Town report due soon

h) Other?

i) New Business:

a. Schedule for meetings in 2016

b. Planning Board: consideration of zoning amendments (anything else?)

c. ZBA

d. NHACC meeting Nov. 7: John attended a workshop on navigating the NHDES website. He shared that Taking action for wildlife.org is a great site with useful information, and he encouraged all BCC members to visit the site. John suggested having a map available where the public can sticker wildlife sightings, etc. It was mentioned that perhaps Marika could have a map available at voting time. John also attended a workshop on trail building.

e. Forest Laws workshop: report from John This will be covered at a later meeting.

f. Dredge and Fill applications

g. Treasurer's report (Pam)

h. Legislative updates (Ken)

i. Other? Pam will contact Fish and Game about the possibility of having turtle crossing signs. Pam said Fish & Game would be willing to survey areas and determine if signs are appropriate.

j) Announcements/correspondence:

a. DES: (to check mail box)

k) Other committees: Trails Committee, IRLAC, ORLAC

l) Easements:

m) Next scheduled meeting: January 21st

Items remaining on agenda, but not expected to be discussed at this meeting:

- a. Emerald Acres (Topaz Dr.)
- b. Conservation Projects:
 - i. Renna property: placing easement on this (and Leahy) will require town vote
 - ii. Barr property, 58 acres, Seavey Bridge Rd.
 - iii. Cook property
 - iv. Cullen Woods property – town has taken title to open space
- c. Calef property: what do we want to allow? (Alison and Pam)
- d. Start thinking about goals for 2016:
 - Calef ‘roll-out’ to public, trail work, restoration, etc.
 - Conservation Plan

Alison Desmarais made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35. Pam Failing seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with a vote of four (4) to zero (0) in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Lenzi