

DEERFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
Meeting Minutes – March 11, 2013

**Members Present:** Erick Berglund, Serita Frey, Kate Hartnett, Dave Linden  
**Visitors:** Frank Mitchell, Alex Cote

Chair, Serita Frey opened the meeting at 7:05 PM.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Serita Frey moved to approve the minutes of the February 11<sup>th</sup> meeting with a second by Dave Linden. The vote to approve was unanimous with no changes; however, Erick Berglund suggested that future minutes **note the time the meetings open and adjourn**. The minutes of the February 13<sup>th</sup> work session were also unanimously approved with no discussion.

**Forest Management:**

Forestry Commissioner **Alex Cote updated the members on his meeting with Charlie Moreno** regarding the progress of the management plans for the 8 town forests. Mr. Moreno has committed to a **deadline of 12/15/2013**, expecting to complete **Dowst-Cate and Weiss and a portion of McNeil by May**. After a brief discussion of the *Freese Town Forest Management Plan* it was determined that it would be more cost effective to accept an abbreviated version of the rest of the plans, without color photos and omitting any redundancy, as proposed by Mr. Moreno. Five bound copies are included per the contract and Frank Mitchell asked if DCC had considered digitizing the reports. It was also **suggested that Dowst-Cat and Weiss be combined into a single plan**. Mr. Cote will speak with Mr. Moreno regarding an **increase in the original project cost of \$10,000 +/- reflecting 175 hours** which is a four year old quote. Both the DCC and Forestry are in agreement that there need to be results.

Kate Hartnett noted that it was the **joint role of both DCC and Forestry to provide the management philosophy and strategy** which should guide Mr. Moreno in structuring the harvest. Ms. Hartnett pointed to Mr. Moreno's previous **list of objectives (contained in the Freese report)** and an outline used for Freese and Dowst Cate. A one to two page **summary including Management Priorities, and Field Work and Key Findings should be created for each parcel**. A meeting with DCC, Forestry and Mr. Moreno to discuss the desired outcome is recommended.

**Land Conservation**

**Project #29:** Kate Hartnett, Herb McKinney and Frank Mitchell, collectively, were able to walk the majority of the two parcels, portions of which appear to be **comprised of prime agricultural soils**, and if acquired, **could add upward of 20 acres to the abutting Lindsay Conservation area**. Frank Mitchell also discovered a **Black Ash/Maple swamp** which is indicative of the potential existence of species characteristic to the second rarest category of wetlands. Kate Hartnett noted that **Map 4 of the Open Space Plan places the property within part of the green infrastructure**, and that acquiring property that adds to existing preserved areas or provides a connector function is more productive from a preservation standpoint when done in conjunction with the Open Space Plan.

The **5 acre parcel is surveyed** and deed restrictions exist with respect to setbacks of buildings from the road. The **recorded plan delineates the building envelope** and the owner would **reserve a small area surrounding the barn**. Inclusion of the smaller piece would improve the shape of the final easement. Although the **20 acre parcel is not surveyed**, it is believed that the actual property line may extend beyond the boundary lines on the tax maps to the North. The owner of the 20 acre piece is only **interested in reserving the area occupied by the house**; however the barn could remain on the easement in the agricultural category. The **presence of Paxton soils provides potential for grant funds from the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program**.

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Since this would be only a **partially donated easement**, an explanation of the acquisition process was explained to the owner's representative, as well as the practice of splitting the costs of the limited summary appraisal and reimbursement of DCC's portion if the easement offer is rescinded by the owners. It was understood that two separate appraisals would probably be required due to the need for comparables on each parcel. Having the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program information available, along with the results of the appraisal, will enable the DCC to **examine how the acquisition fits into its budget** and to then move ahead with a Purchase and Sale agreement. **Bear-Paw has reiterated its desire to be involved in the process, with the ultimate goal of holding the easement and the Town of Deerfield holding the executory interest.** Frank Mitchell has offered to make some **inquiries Bear-Paw Land Conservation meeting** in two weeks, reminding the members that Bear-Paw's relationship is best established at the start of the project. DCC will discuss the potential acquisition and inform the owner's representative of their determination.

**Phragmites on Lindsay-Flanders:**

Frank Mitchell detected a stand of *Phragmites*, **an invasive plant species, encroaching on the Lindsay-Flanders Conservation Area.** A group of DCC volunteers will meet in the spring to **cover the vegetation with black geo textile** which needs to remain in place for two years in order to smother the plants. An alternative solution would be treatment with Round-Up, however the stand is small enough that herbicide should not be necessary.

**Town Forest Protection Project**

**Easement Deed Review:** Serita Frey reported that good progress was made by a subcommittee of DCC members who met on February 15<sup>th</sup> and **reviewed the sections on Purposes, Stewardship, Use Limitations, and Reserved Rights** of the draft conservation easement deed. Serita Frey and Kate Hartnett will **finalize the review of sections 6- Discretionary Consent, 7-Additional Easement and 8-Stewardship Responsibilities of the Grantee** in preparation for submission to Attorney Raymond. It is anticipated that **Attorney Raymond will review, amend and condense section 5, Administration.** Serita Frey noted that she was **advised against including the appendix on Donor Intent in the deed,** however the information it provided was recognized as being significant and the DCC members wish to express their **appreciation to Frank Mitchell for his efforts** researching the information.

**Financial Officer's Report:** Erick Berglund had not yet received a report on the balance of the Conservation Fund for the month of February but noted that the DCC budget for 2013 will either be the proposed or the default, depending on the results of the March 12<sup>th</sup> voting.

**Regulated Wetlands:** Erick Berglund further investigated the **Parade Road culvert issue** using the public access to the DES permit database. The **most recent permit dates back to 2008** which covered eight to ten proposed culverts.

Serita Frey adjourned the meeting at 9:08 PM.

**The Next Meeting is Scheduled for Monday, April 8th**

*The draft minutes were prepared and submitted by Judy Marshall. Final revisions to these minutes will be contained in the minutes of the following meeting, after approval by the Deerfield Conservation Commission*