

DEERFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes – March 9, 2015

Members Present Erick Berglund, Deb Campelia, Jim Deely, Serita Frey, Wes Golomb, Kate Hartnett,
Members Absent: Dave Linden
Visitors: Amy Harrington, Leigh Harrington

Chair Serita Frey **called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM followed by introductions.** Visitor Leigh Harrington explained that she was attending in order to fulfill a requirement for her coursework in Environmental Conservation at UNH in the *Department of Natural Resources and the Environment*, and more specifically for her class, *Resolving Environmental Conflicts*. Kate Hartnett explained, for the benefit of the visitors, the significance of Deerfield's *Open Space Plan* which provides a template from which to work in the overall planning process. Ms. Hartnett stressed the importance of Map #4 of Deerfield's *Green Infrastructure*. The following excerpt is taken from Deerfield's August, 2010 *Open Space Plan* which can be viewed at: http://townofdeerfieldnh.com/Pages/DeerfieldNH_BComm/Planning/planning_docs

The Deerfield Open Space Committee shall update and develop an open space plan that identifies an open space network known as the "Green Infrastructure." This network consists of high natural resource value land areas, and the connections between them. These lands are considered to be the most important for protection from residential, commercial and industrial growth to preserve the Town's natural and cultural resources, agricultural character and quality of life. This plan will aid the town in making the best decisions when considering new open space lands to protect. In subsequent efforts, the Committee shall, in collaboration with other Town Boards, Commissions and staff, undertake other tasks aimed at implementing the protection of the lands identified.

Approval of Minutes: The **minutes of the February 12th meeting** were approved by the members present at the time of the motion (Erick Berglund, Deb Campelia, Serita Frey, Wes Golomb and Kate Hartnett) after **amending, at the request of Erick Berglund, as follows:**

Easement Monitoring: Erick Berglund informed the group that Greg Doane is willing to ~~perform~~ assist other DCC members with the annual monitoring of the Katharyn E. Williams conservation easement, currently owned by Dana and Paula Merrill.

Deb Campelia indicated that she could assist with the Merrill monitoring but was not comfortable directing it herself. **Serita Frey will contact Frank Mitchell to see if he would be willing to lead the group** prior to the ground becoming muddy and before the Merrill's begin planting trees. **Erick Berglund will contact Dana Merrill** after Frank Mitchell has been reached.

Finance: Erick Berglund reported that the balance in the **Conservation Fund at the end of January was \$202,395.35 reflecting interest of \$25.36, and a deposit of \$4111.70 which included DCC's portion of the 4th Quarter Land Use Change Tax in the amount of \$3350. The February 28th ending balance was 207,643.73 reflecting interest of \$23.38 as well as the expected reimbursement of \$5225 from the Forestry Committee for costs incurred by the DCC for the development of forest management plans by the Town's Forester, Charlie Moreno.**

Land Conservation: Kate Hartnett explained DCC's **desire to preserve open, undeveloped tracts of land in the area of the Lamprey River headwaters and drainage.** Given its extremely limited conservation funds, the DCC continues to explore additional avenues to meet its goals including collaborating with landowners, partnering with land conservation organizations and identifying sources of public, state and federal funding. There was discussion about grants offered through the *Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund Program*

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administered through the NH Department of Environmental Services, Wetlands Bureau.
http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/wmp/documents/arm_app.pdf

The program provides a means for compensating communities that have been affected by significant impacts caused by...*land development and other human activities that require dredging, filling and construction in wetlands and surface water resources...*(affecting) *the functions and values of wetlands and surface waters, such as wildlife habitat, water quality renovation, or flood storage and desynchronization, among others. **The purpose of mitigation is to achieve no net loss of wetland functions and values from development projects.*** Forms of mitigation can include (1) *Restoration of previously existing wetland,* (2) *Creating a new wetland,* or (3) *Preserving land (at least 50% upland) to protect the values of the adjacent wetlands or water resource.* Compensation may also be in the form of monetary payments into the mitigation fund by the entities causing the impacts, which are then allocated to the watersheds in which the impacts occurred. *DES holds and manages funds to be offered as grants for potential projects that will accomplish long-term environmental results.* Additional information about the program and the application process can be found at:
<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/wmp/>

Kate Hartnett noted that in the past six years, the **DES, through its mitigation program, has conserved 11,000 acres of land, restored 15 Acres of wetland, and over 1 mile of stream. Currently there is approximately \$2.3 million available for 9 watersheds throughout the state,** most of which has been allocated to the Merrimack River watershed. It was questioned whether the program was specifically targeted for areas surrounding Nottingham Mountain.

Phragmites: Serita Frey has been unsuccessful in reaching the residents on **Mountain View Road since her initial contact with them to discuss the establishment of Phragmites, a non-native invasive plant, on their property.** Ms. Frey has sent an e-mail in hopes of arranging a meeting with a small group of members to review options for removal. Ms. Frey will contact **Kate Hartnett if she makes contact with the resident.** Ms. Hartnett noted that Glen Roberts of the DOT and Christine Perron, who gives training courses at the UNH Technical Transfer Center, are **potential resources for information regarding management of the invasive.**

Local Energy Solutions Conference: Wes Golomb reported that the **2015 Local Energy Solutions Conference will be held on March 21st at the Grappone Center in Concord.** The event, which *provides critical resources, information, and guidance for local governments and school districts across the state seeking to implement an energy reduction project in their municipality,* is being sponsored by the *NH Local Energy Work Group* and the *NH Sustainable Energy Association.* More information is available at:
<http://lesconference.nhenergy.org/>

The keynote speaker this year will be Brian Keane, President of *Smart Power.* Mr. Golomb noted that **47 of 50 states will have grid parity by 2016** with California, Massachusetts and New Jersey being in the lead, having been early adopters. Serita Frey reported that according to the *Union of Concerned Scientists* the number of **homes with rooftop solar from 2006 to 2013 increased from 30,000 to 400,000 with a projected figure of 900,000 to 3.8 million by 2020.** <http://blog.ucsusa.org/solar-power-on-the-rise-rooftop-solar-large-scale-pv-csp-and-the-solar-revolution-618>

Northern Pass: Erick Berglund reported on **the status of the Northern Pass project and the continued opposition to acceptance in its proposed form.** Opposition was 2 to 1 against Northern Pass with equally strong support for burial. A hand-out was made available favoring alternatives to the proposed 145-foot steel towers, and supporting *YES* votes on Warrant Article #9, which would create a trust fund of \$10,000 to finance anticipated legal expenses to advocate for the Town, and Warrant Article #17 which would allow the BOS to

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accept donations, grants and gifts for the same purpose. These Warrant Articles **recognize the Town's need to obtain the expertise of qualified, duly certified consultants to represent the Town's position, to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the Town, and for the Town to effectively participate in the site evaluation process.** Serita Frey questioned whether the BOS appreciated the **costs that the Town could incur during this process and** was informed that the **proposed Warrant Articles are supported by both the BOS and the MBC.**

Select Board member Rebecca Hutchinson approached Erick Berglund with a copy of correspondence received by the BOS from **Northern Pass inviting the Town to present mitigation opportunities for consideration, to offset the inevitable/unavoidable disturbances to the environment that will result from the project.** Northern Pass, recognizing that there will be a need to mitigate, is looking for suitable projects in Deerfield, and has suggested the following options:

- A monetary donation to a conservation-related project (ready to launch)
- A land purchase/donation to enhance an existing conservation property
- Culvert replacement project funding
- Wetland or riparian restoration/enhancement projects
- Natural resources GIS mapping
- Town wetland inventory and mapping

Ms. Hutchinson has asked for DCC's thoughts and if it has any potential projects. **Northern Pass has set a deadline to contact their outreach representative by March 27th.** Chair Frey felt that DCC should act on this proposal and felt it would **be helpful to check with other towns.** Erick Berglund stated that he has been talking with Sugar Hill and that he would also contact Lisa Wolford. **The general feel of the group was that the criteria were unacceptable and unreasonable as proposed and that Northern Pass did not understand the constraints of their timeline for compensatory mitigation.** Although there are several major projects that would likely qualify, there is insufficient time to give them serious consideration; however, Chair Frey reiterated that if the Northern Pass project goes forward, the DCC would be remiss if it did not take advantage of the offer, regardless of the motives fueling it.

It was suggested that the **response should come from the BOS** and Kate Hartnett felt that it should indicate that DCC is interested; always having more projects than funds to support them, but that the Commission finds it insulting that the letter comes with such short notice. Ms. Frey felt that it would be **better if multiple towns could collaborate and respond collectively** rather than individually, and that the arguments would be stronger coming from a consolidated group of towns speaking with one voice. **The next meeting of the BOS is scheduled for Monday, March 23rd.**

Correspondence: DCC has received a **letter from Nik Coates, Executive Director of the NH Association of Conservation Commissions,** along with five copies of the *Society for the Protection of NH Forests'* conservation magazine, *Forest Notes.* The Winter 2015 edition features a feature article by Mr. Coates entitled *50 Years of Conservation Commissions* in which the **DCC was recognized for its work in permanently protecting Deerfield's eight Town Forests and conservation areas in a section entitled *Real Protection for Town Forests in Deerfield.***

Also received were **annual monitoring reports for easements held in town by *Bear-Paw Regional Greenways*** for visits made to **16 conservation properties in 2012, 2013 and 2014.** Included were reports for the eight Town Forests and Conservation areas. The Clerk will look for blank, non-LCIP reporting forms for the Merrill easement monitoring.

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Serita Frey **adjourned the meeting at 8:20 and reconvened at 8:25 upon the arrival of Jim Deely.** Mr. Deely was unavoidably delayed and asked to update the members on the status of the Trails Committee.

Trails: Mr. Deely has **scheduled a combination pot luck supper/meeting for April 14th at 6 PM at the Historic Town Hall for anyone interested in the trails.** Included will be a round table discussion of potential Town trails. The primary focus will be on conservation land and protected land, but will include **exploration of trails on private land** whose owners are willing to open up their land for the use of existing trails or the creation of new trails on their property. In addition, the idea of linking trails will be up for discussion. One exciting example is **the linkage of Peg King Park with the ball field.**

Mr. Deely plans to have the current **Planning Board trail maps enlarged and on hand for the meeting.** Part of the agenda will be consideration of a future project to **add maps of existing trails located on properties that have not yet been mapped, and to complete the mapping of trails that are not entirely mapped,** such as Peg King Park. A speaker is planned for the topic of *Trail Building Etiquette*. Great Brook Trail will be part of the etiquette discussion and Holly Tomilson will attend to address existing problems.

Mr. Deely informed the members that there is now a **Facebook page for the Deerfield Trails Club** which currently has 75 likes. The trail maps are on the page along with photos and posts by hikers including Andy Robertson and Rebecca Hutchinson. The *Facebook* page, originally by invitation, is anticipated to be opened up to the general public.

It was confirmed that the club was looking for volunteers, and Mr. Deely added that there would be a “To-Do” roundtable which would include trail-blazing. Kate Hartnett suggested that **volunteers could act as easement monitors, performing informal observations and reporting.** The meeting information is currently on *Facebook* and Mr. Deely plans to post a notice on the Town website and on *The Forum*. **The importance of keeping the BOS informed** was stressed and Mr. Deely stated that he intended to notify the School Board as well.

Chair Serita Frey officially adjourned the meeting at 8:40 PM.

The Next Meeting is Scheduled for Monday, April 13th

(Please check the website for scheduling changes)

townofdeerfieldnh.com

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