

DEERFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
Meeting Minutes – April 11, 2016

**Members Present:** Deb Campelia, Erick Berglund, Kate Hartnett, Serita Frey, Wes Golomb  
**Absent:** Jim Deely  
**Visitors:** Dan Kern, Bear-Paw Regional Greenways  
Residents: Harriet Cady and James Page

The meeting was **called to order at 7:12 PM** by Chair, Serita Frey

Serita Frey moved to **retain the current slate of officers**. A second by Wes Golomb was followed by unanimous approval of **Serita Frey as Chair and Erick Berglund as Finance Officer**. Both nominees accepted.

**Approval of Minutes:** A motion by Chair Frey to approve the minutes from both the **March 14<sup>th</sup> regular meeting and the March 25<sup>th</sup> special meeting** was seconded by Wes Golomb and approved unanimously without discussion.

**Visitor Comments:** Resident, **Harriet Cady objected to the Conservation Commission taking a political position on the Northern Pass which Ms. Cady categorized as “compelled speech”**. Ms. Cady felt that advocating for burial of the lines would result in rate increases. Kate Hartnett offered a rebuttal, and attempted to correct some misconceptions on the part of Ms. Cady. The Chair then recognized **resident James Page who expressed a number of observations and concerns that he had about the Northern Pass Project** and asked that the Conservation Commission “watch out for Deerfield”. Chair Frey suggested that Mr. Page bring his concerns to the **Select board’s hearing to be held on April 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm**.

**Project #31:** Dan Kern from Bear-Paw was present to discuss the **results of a meeting with the owner of the property on March 22<sup>nd</sup>**. **Both Serita Frey and Kate Hartnett had accompanied Mr. Kern on the visit to get a sense of the owner’s plans for the parcel**. A portion of the parcel is currently on the market and the balance is available either for conservation easement or outright purchase. The owner intends to eventually sell the property in its entirety but appears to be interested in prohibiting further development.

Kate Hartnett commented on the property’s **unusual characteristics including its historic character and its combination of managed forest and agricultural land** making it one of the more significant properties with which DCC has dealt. The parcel’s **proximity to other conserved areas** would make it a **good candidate as a town forest**; however, the back portion of the property is currently under conservation easement. It has **existing trails and has been conservatively maintained by a forester**.

Both Serita Frey and Kate Hartnett noted that **had DCC been informed prior the owner’s decision to carve out and market the house and eleven surrounding acres from the parcel, this may have been a more compelling opportunity**. Mr. Kern noted that the **1500 feet of road frontage makes the property very developable** as well as expensive, and although the property is unique due to a combination of factors, it does not have one, singular feature. **Kate Hartnett, however, noted that in spite of its ample road frontage, section 325 of the Deerfield Zoning Ordinance (Open Space Development) would place limits on the options for subdivision**.

Unlike the Boisvert property, which was a bargain sale, **conservation funds alone would not be adequate and any acquisition would require a combination of funding sources**. An outright purchase by the Town would require a warrant article to request partial funding from the town’s general fund. Further noted was that the Freese Town Forest acquisition already had partial funding from LCHIP when it was presented to the Town for vote.

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Ms. Frey noted that the **precedent has been not to pay full value for a property**. One option could be a deed restriction on the property being sold.

Serita Frey felt that the **historic nature of the property might lend itself to LCHIP funding**. According to Mr. Kern, LCHIP values at market and recognizes development potential; however, he noted that **LCHIP funding mandates that the property be open to hunting and public access**, thus requiring that **a sufficient amount of surrounding, non-public land be allocated to an occupied home as a buffer** to make it attractive to a buyer as a residence. **Mr. Kern has submitted a grant application**, which if awarded, could pay for **half of an appraisal** of the property to determine its market value, but an appraiser would require having some idea of how the parcel would actually be configured.

**Finance:** The **January ending balance in the conservation fund was reported in the March 14<sup>th</sup> minutes as \$240,710.06**. The new balance at the end of February of **\$257,564.57** reflects the addition of **\$16,825** representing the **50% portion of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2015 Land Use Change tax and interest in the amount of \$29.51**. Mr. Berglund reported that DCC was expecting **additional land use change tax credits from 2013 and 2014 which were discovered in an audit, and which had not been properly recorded as Land Use Change Tax**.

**Forestry & Land Management:** Erick Berglund was contacted by a resident who routinely harvests felled trees, asking if he could be allowed to **remove some downed timber from the Dowst-Cate Town Forest**. It is unclear if the timber is the result of utility cutting, but may be, based on a photo of the area. Serita Frey noted that it is **DCC's policy, generally, not to allow cutting of firewood on town forest land**. Kate Hartnett will contact Road Agent, Mark Young to determine if there is a Highway Department policy for the removal of felled timber from town property and Welfare Director, Denise Greig to determine if there is a town "wood bank" for the benefit of residents in need. **Ms. Hartnett will then contact the resident and offer to meet with him** to ensure that care is taken not to disturb the soil in the removal process and that only the dropped wood is removed. Concerns for setting a precedent for wood "collection" were duly noted.

**Phragmites:** After a closer inspection, Kate Hartnett was happy to report that a **potential stand of Phragmites mentioned at the March meeting was, in fact, cattails**. There was further discussion about the **positively identified Phragmites stand on Route 43 that needs to be removed**. Ms. Hartnett feels that the estimated cost of \$700 for a professional to apply the herbicide would be a wise expenditure, one that could be funded through a joint initiative between the landowner, abutters and DCC. **Serita Frey will contact the owners of the property and ask them to contribute, along with the DCC, and the abutters to the affected property**. The State has already indicated its willingness to issue a permit for professional application of the herbicide.

**Easement Monitoring:** Serita Frey noted that the **Kay Williams Easement has not been monitored since 4/18/2015**. It was suggested that the annual monitoring of the property be conducted within the next month. **Kate Hartnett will call the property owner to schedule**.

DCC recently contacted by **Sylvia von Aulock of the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission with an offer** to share, with the Town of Hooksett, what was originally thought to be a *natural resource planner*. Kate Hartnett discovered that the *planner* was actually a *stewardship monitor*. Since **DCC members, along with Bear-Paw volunteers, perform the annual monitoring for Deerfield, DCC will not be considering the expenditure**.

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**Announcements and Correspondence:**

DCC received correspondence announcing the **2016 annual meeting of the Rockingham County Conservation District**. The keynote speaker, Soil Scientist Kimberly McCracken, will speak on *Climate Variability and what it means for Agriculture in New Hampshire*.

**The Town of Exeter extended an invitation to attend its Health Lawns-Clean Water Forum**, 5:30 to 8:30 pm on Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at Exeter High School. The public is encouraged to attend the event, focusing on *wise use of fertilizers as well as pesticides, insecticides, herbicides and neonicotinoids*.

**UNH Cooperative Extension's Stewardship Network is offering free, downloadable training guides.** Topics are *Leading Nature Walks*, *Monitoring Conservation Easements* and *Outdoor Skills for Conservation Volunteers* and can be downloaded at <https://newengland.stewardshipnetwork.org/training-guides>

Members were encouraged to attend **Bear-Paw's Breakfast in the Barn** event on **Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at 9 am**.

Chair Frey adjourned the meeting at 9:05 pm.

**The Next Meeting is Scheduled for Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

*(Please check the website for scheduling changes)*

[townofdeerfieldnh.com](http://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*