

DEERFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes – September 12th, 2016

Members Present: Erick Berglund, Deb Campelia, Serita Frey, Wes Golomb, Kate Hartnett, Jim Deely
Visitors: Chuck Braxton, Nick Brunet, Harriet Cady, Frank Mitchell

The meeting was **called to order at 7:18 PM** by Chair Serita Frey

Non-public Session #1: The scheduled non-public session was postponed until the October meeting.

Visitors:

Chuck Braxton from Roche Realty Group and Nick Brunet representing Green Crow Corporation presented their ideas for possible Town acquisition of a 101 acre parcel (Map 404 Lot 5) that abuts the Boisvert Town Forest off Dow Road. They noted that **the property's location in relation to the Boisvert Town Forest, NH Fish and Game's Corey Wildlife Management Area and the Wells Town Forest makes it a keystone in connecting the three parcels and creating a 500-acre contiguous block of wild land.** The subject property was acquired by Green Crow in 2000 and was heavily cut in 2001. Subsequent offers to market the property to other conservation organizations have not been successful

The asking price for the Green Crow parcel is \$127,425. Alternatively, Mr. Braxton and Mr. Brunet proposed a transaction in which **conservation easements would be created on both the Green Crow and Boisvert properties, after which Green Crow would swap the 101 acre parcel (plus a cash payment to offset the value of the timber on the Boisvert parcel), for the Boisvert Town Forest.** The Boisvert property would then be owned by Green Crow and logged under a forestry plan. Mr. Braxton referenced other conservation projects, in which he had been involved, as models.

Serita Frey explained that the Boisvert property was acquired in a bargain sale and declared a Town Forest by vote of the Town. **Any attempt to reverse that decision in favor of the proposed transaction would require a warrant article, but more importantly, asking the Town to consider such a proposal after Town funds had been expended and a Town Forest had been created, would be, as Wes Golomb noted, sending the wrong message.** Chair Frey questioned why Green Crow would not just conserve the property; however, Mr. Brunet noted that the owners were not in the business of donating easements.

Chair Frey explained that the **DCC was keen on protecting the Green Crow property**, but that the **DCC has limited funds and would need to look for creative funding mechanisms in order to consider an acquisition.** The DCC will have a conversation and brainstorm.

Regular Business:

Kate Hartnett reported on the **Complete Streets scoping meeting she attended on August 23rd** with NH DOT and Southern NH Planning Commission (SNHPC). Ms. Hartnett explained that a "complete street" is one that provides opportunities for use by all types of transport; auto, pedestrian, bicycle, etc. The Planning Board has received a grant to work with SNHPC on this temporary pilot program which is an example of "pop-up planning". The project will be piloted in Deerfield Center (Church Street area) and Forest Glenn subdivision (Hartford Brook Rd.).

Approval of Minutes: A motion by Chair Frey to approve the minutes from the **July 11th regular meeting** was seconded by Erick Berglund and unanimously approved.

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Finance: The **balance in the Conservation Fund** at the end June was \$284,803.66 reflecting earned interest of 35.01. As of 7/31/2016 a deposit of \$11,668.22 representing DCC's portion of revenue from Land Use Change Tax, and interest of \$36.38, resulted in a balance of \$296,508.26.

Erick Berglund moved to **pay an \$800.00 invoice from Scot Heath for an appraisal.** The motion was seconded by Serita Frey and approved unanimously.

Northern Pass:

Kate Hartnett gave an update on the **status of the Wetland Permit Application for geotechnical investigations (borings) to be performed at the substation in Deerfield (Map 408 Lot 49) as part of the Northern Pass Transmission (NPT) project.** Although the application was submitted for standard review, a separate request from NPT for expedited review was approved by DES Commissioner Burack. Ms. Hartnett has notified Craig Rennie at the DES Wetlands Bureau of DCC's intent to comment on the application, which she noted was **received by the Town on August 25th for standard review.** Lacking administrative precedent, and given the now-shortened timeframe required of DES to complete its investigation, Kate Hartnett requested that additional comments from members be sent to her by Wednesday in order to forward them to DES along with input from Fred McGarry, Phil Bilodeau and Pete Schibellhute. Erick Berglund had a particular concern about the safety of Blanding's turtles and will comment.

Easements and Land Protection:

The non-public session for Project #31 will be rescheduled for a later date, pending receipt of the appraisal.

Bear-Paw Regional Greenways submitted a grant proposal on behalf of the DCC, to the Merrimack Conservation Partnership (MCP) for the amount of \$20,000. If awarded, the funds would be used to cover the transaction costs of placing an easement on the Edyth H. Boisvert Town Forest. Eligibility was based on the Boisvert property's location within the Merrimack Valley watershed. These grants...*help underwrite conservation projects that protect ecologically important Merrimack Valley Watershed region of New Hampshire and Massachusetts.* The grants provide funding for...*transaction costs – appraisals, surveys, title research, staff time, etc. — on conservation transactions that protect land identified in the Merrimack Valley Regional Conservation Plan.* <https://merrimackconservationpartnership.org/2016/03/25/merrimack-conservation-partnership-announces-grant-awards/>

Serita Frey submitted the completed Merrill easement monitoring report for the Kay Williams easement. A copy of the report is on file and has also been forwarded to the landowner.

Chair Frey has passed on a carton of previously-purchased **“medallions” to be used for marking the boundaries of the town forests,** and will be stored at the GBW.

Trails:

Member Jim Deely reported on the status of the downed tree at Peg King Park. The naturally felled tree was reported to have fallen across the bridge, blocking the trail. The section over the bridge was cut away and the debris was intentionally left on either side of the bridge as wildlife habitat.

Mr. Deely reported that he is in **need of volunteers to help re-mark the trails at Dowst-Cate Town Forest.** Resident, **Kevin Verville has generously offered to donate as much spray paint as needed for the project.** Although not as durable/permanent as metal trail markers, it was decided that donated paint is the most economical choice. Deb Campelia volunteered to create a template for marking. **DCC'ers send their thanks to Mr. Verville!**

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Serita Frey noted that residents had voiced concerns regarding the logging of Dowst-Cate Town Forest. In response, Ms. Frey explained the role that forestry plans and strategic timber harvests play in maintaining a healthy forest. Ms. Frey expressed the **need for public education** in this regard. Mr. Deely commented that **trails should weigh more heavily than they have in the past when creating forestry plans.** Although not consistent across all the town forests, a list of possible approved activities was created as part of the planning for the Freese Town Forest, and the 2014 easement deed for the 7 town forests and conservation areas addresses allowed activities by individual deed.

Planning of a fall trails day is in the works for October 8th. Not only will this provide an opportunity for trail cleanup, but can also create an opening to **educate and enlighten the public** while they spend an afternoon enjoying the trails. Although the date coincides with the Town yard sale, Kate Hartnett suggested purchasing a pair of loppers from one of your neighbors and then coming out for a little trail clean-up! Erick Berglund noted that the *Student Conservation Corps* provides trail building services at a cost of \$16,000 per week, high-lighting the value of volunteers performing the chore. It was suggested that notices of the event be placed on FACEBOOK, in the FORUM and on the Town website. Trails could be assigned and there could be an on-line sign-up page. Ms. Campelia has some zipper-pulls that could serve as awards for the volunteers.

Mr. Deely invites anyone interested in trail activities to go to the **Trails Club Facebook page and check out what's going on with the more than 200 Trails Club members,** and reminded everyone about the **Planning Board pdf trail maps (below).** Mr. Deely also noted that the Peg King Park trails are in need of mapping. http://townofdeerfieldnh.com/Pages/DeerfieldNH_BComm/Conservation/Trail%20Maps

Regulated Wetlands:
Wetland Notifications:

DCC submitted comments to the NHDES on June 16, 2016 in response to the **Scott Sybert Wetlands Permit Application File #2016-01285 for a driveway crossing on Map 408 Lot 16, 93 Coffeetown Rd.** These comments were the result of a May 13, 2016 functional assessment performed by Frank Mitchell and Kate Hartnett. DES has since issued a **Request for More Information** dated July 22, 2016 which requires the applicant respond by September 20, 2016 or the application for the permit will be denied. Ms. Hartnett feels other options are available for the proposed project, but was satisfied with the DES response in the matter. No further action is required of the DCC at the present time.

NHDES Wetlands Permit Application: Pleasant Lake – 7 Loon Ledge – Map 207 Lot 21 – Donald Jsirandis Living Trust. The application is for the replacement of an existing legal dock (No DCC action recommended).

Complete Forestry Notification: DES File# 2016-02144 – John and Larena Sinnamon – Mountain Rd –Map 418 Lots 1 & 1-1, Map 415 Lots 93 & 94 (No DCC action recommended).

Complete Forestry Notification: DES File# 2016-02146 – Mathes Family Ltd. Partnership - (Locations to be determined – Incorrect Map/Lot numbers listed on notice). **Kate Hartnett will contact DES Land Resources Management to address the lack of a verifiable location for the work being proposed.**

Complete Forestry Notification: DES File# 2016-02184 – Donna Lobsien – 60 Ridge Rd –Map 414 Lot 29 (No DCC action recommended).

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Invasive Species – Phragmites:

Attempts to reach the invasives specialist who was to have treated the stand of phragmites on Route 43 in early fall have been unsuccessful. It now seems that another vendor with an aquatic license will need to be found; however, the window of opportunity for treatment this year has likely closed. Erick Berglund mentioned he knows of another potential service provider, and Kate Hartnett will continue to attempt to contact the previous one.

Announcements & Correspondence:

Deb Campelia has secured a prime space in the flower building for the DCC display at the Deerfield Fair.

Ms. Campelia is looking for specimens of Phragmites, Knotweed, Purple Loosestrife, Bittersweet, Autumn Olive and Multiflora Rose as examples of local invasive species. Kate Hartnett has named Deb Campelia DCC's new "invasives queen" and also took the opportunity to thank both Ms. Campelia and Wes Golomb for their contributions to the DCC display at the Deerfield 250th celebration. Mr. Golomb's photos will also be featured at the fair booth.

Kate Hartnett made four brief announcements:

1. There is a private realty organization that specializes in **connecting farmers with farmland** and provides opportunities for farmers to take over the land.
2. Ms. Hartnett invited anyone with an interest, to attend the **Northern Pass, all-day technical sessions in Concord on September 19th and 20th.**
3. **Work is ongoing on the NH Fish and Game Corey WMA/BMI easement** (Browns Mill Rd).
4. **Deerfield Scenic Road cutting** is being reviewed.

A motion by Chair Frey to adjourn at 9:05 pm was seconded by Deb Campelia and approved unanimously.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 17th, 2016
(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