

DEERFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

1967 - FIFTY YEARS AND COUNTING - 2017

Meeting Minutes – January 22, 2018

Members Present: Haley Andreozzi, Erick Berglund, Serita Frey, Wes Golomb, Kate Hartnett
Members Absent: Ben Minerd
Visitors/Guests: Deerfield Chief of Police Gary Duquette, Eric Mitchell, Dan Kern,

At 7:05 pm Chair Serita Frey called the meeting to order and made introductions.

At DCC's invitation, **Deerfield Police Chief Gary Duquette** listened to concerns about target shooting and potential stray bullets in and around conservation areas. The conversation was initiated in response to correspondence from a Cottonwood Estates resident about **target shooting with semi-automatic weapons in the conserved, open space area surrounding the 35 homes in the subdivision**. A DCC member also reported **gunfire occurring uncomfortably close to a trail in the Lindsay-Flanders Town Forest**. Members feel these situations pose a safety hazard to residents and hikers using the recreational areas and should be addressed.

Chief Duquette was knowledgeable about gun discharge regulations in Maine. He previously had researched New Hampshire state statutes and spoke with NH Fish and Game, but concluded that there are no enforceable New Hampshire laws, other than the **300-foot minimum distance from an occupied residence or shooting while intoxicated** that would allow the Police Department to take any action. **Chief Duquette strongly recommends that residents call Deerfield Police immediately** so that authorities can locate the source of the gunfire and evaluate whether there is a violation. If no violation exists, authorities can at least make shooters aware of safety issues posed by the discharge of firearms in these multiple use areas. **Chief Duquette discourages individuals from attempting to locate the source of the gunfire themselves.**

Chief Duquette was given **information about an ordinance adopted by the Town of Londonderry in 2015 that addresses discharge issues** in one of its conservation areas and places limits on timing and caliber. Erick Berglund suggested the **Town might consider creating a range for target shooting**. Future discussions should **address the problem in three stages: Cottonwood Estates, town forests and conservation areas, and other public land.**

Surveyor Eric Mitchell presented a sample deed for the proposed open space development on Mt Delight Road (Map 413 Lot 62). The subdivision, currently before the Planning Board, would consist of three duplex condominiums situated on 3 to 4 acres, with an open space area of approximately 27 acres. Mr. Mitchell suggests the open space area be deeded to the Town. **The deed would stipulate how the area could be used (recreation, hunting, forestry, environmental/wildlife protection) and could include reserved rights (right to post, future tree cutting restrictions)**. Use restrictions could either be incorporated into the deed conveyed from the developer to the Town, or by creating a separate conservation easement deed for the parcel after the change of ownership is finalized. **Dan Kern recommended having fewer initial deed restrictions and allowing the town to decide on permanent restrictions in the future.** An option would be to make the area a town forest and convey a conservation easement. Mr. Mitchell will return on February 12th to obtain members' input on the deed.

Town Forest Protection – Boisvert Town Forest:

Dan Kern announced that the property boundary is being blazed. Changes to the survey notes have been requested and a **property description is still needed**; however there has been no response from the surveyor. Serita Frey was **able to obtain a copy of the 2012 title search and title insurance policy from Attorney Raymond**

Easements & Land Protection:

Project #31: Dan Kern shared copies of the grant award letter and project agreement letter from the *Land & Community Heritage Investment Program* (LCHIP). **The \$50,000 grant will be used to partially fund the joint Bear-Paw/DCC project.** Serita Frey and Kate Hartnett will meet with Dan Kern and the landowner after which there will be a better understanding of the next steps to complete the project. **A \$7500 grant to cover transaction costs is contingent upon completion of certain elements of the project, and has been extended to March 31, 2018.** Chair Frey volunteered to be the designated representative to work with Dan Kern going forward, and will update members at DCC's February meeting.

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Project #35: If undertaken, the proposed Epsom/Deerfield/Bear-Paw collaboration would result in over 400 acres of unfragmented, conserved land spanning the two towns. **Dan Kern has received appraised valuations for the four parcels; two in Deerfield and two in Epsom.** Moving ahead with both towns together would be ideal, allowing for joint grant applications; however, understanding that Deerfield's focus needs to stay on Project #31 for the time being, **Mr. Kern will continue moving forward with the Epsom piece of the project, research funding opportunities, and keep DCC in the loop.** One of the Deerfield parcels abuts a Town Forest and is currently under a *Wetland Reserve Program* easement. Erick Berglund questioned the need to purchase that parcel since it was already protected. Mr. Kern offered **maintaining control of the parcel and building on the Hart Town Forest as reasons for an acquisition.** Mr. Kern will also **explore bringing an additional parcel into the project.** The increase in size could make it a more interesting candidate for an LCHIP grant. In the interim, DCC would think about the costs and its interest in moving ahead with the project.

Approval of Minutes: A motion by Chair Serita Frey to approve the **minutes of the December 18th meeting** was followed by a second from Erick Berglund and passed unanimously.

Finance: Erick Berglund reported a **November 30th balance in the conservation fund of \$354,160.69** reflecting interest of \$72.76. Mr. Berglund **moved to pay \$900 for the Scot Heath appraisal for Project #35. The amount represents 50% of the total cost which is being shared with the Town of Epsom.** The motion was seconded by Serita Frey and passed unanimously.

Mr. Berglund gave members **copies of NH RSA 36-A governing conservation commissions along with an Overview of Current Use Assessment** compiled by UNH Cooperative Extension. Also provided was a summary explaining the revenues that go into the conservation fund and how these funds are spent. Mr. Berglund felt it was important that this information be reviewed periodically by the members.

A suggestion for the future is to publish an article explaining these concepts. **Project 31 would be an excellent example of how conservation funds were leveraged with grant money, matching funds, and gifts.** A Forum article announcing the completion of the project would have educational value and capitalize on a newsworthy event. **Mr. Berglund suggested presenting a series of articles entitled Conservation 101.** Also suggested was submission of bullet-point updates of DCC meetings for either the Forum or Facebook.

At its December meeting, DCC discussed an invitation from the Stoddard Conservation Commission to add its support for HB 1343 that would “*...benefit conservation by strengthening the protection of beavers mainly through better reporting of beavers taken out of season and the removal of their dams*”. A decision had been tabled till the January meeting. In the interim, Haley Andreozzi researched the issue and found that **NH Fish and Game opposed the bill inasmuch as it would restrict how they manage in perpetuity.** Members were not in complete agreement on how to respond and **no action was taken.**

Regulated Wetlands:

NEW Wetland Notifications:

Wetlands Minimum Impact Forestry Notification – File #2017-03568

Daniel & Meredith Briggs – 31 South Rd – Map 423 Lot 58

Serita Frey adjourned the meeting at 9:05 pm

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 12, 2018

(Please check the website for scheduling changes)

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These minutes were prepared and submitted by Judy Marshall. Revisions, if any, will be contained in the minutes of the following meeting, and an amended version will be posted to the website, after approval by the Deerfield Conservation Commission