

Falmouth Conservation Commission **Minutes of June 30, 2008**

Meeting convened at 7:09 PM

Members Present: Lissa Robinson, Chair, Caleb Hemphill, Mel Dickenson, Frank Ruch, Sean Mahoney

Members Absent: Willie Audet

Liaisons: Lissa Robinson (LPAC), Caleb Hemphill (FTAC, FLT), Sean Mahoney (FLT)

Staff: Gary Fogg (consultant)

Monthly Meeting Leader: Sean Mahoney

Minutes

The minutes for the meeting of June 2, 2008 were approved as amended.

Yardscaping

The members reviewed the first draft of a fact sheet prepared by Gary Fogg on low impact lawn and garden practices designed to protect water quality from pesticides and fertilizers contained in stormwater runoff. The people, organizations and online resources referred to in the document are those that are likely to be the most relevant and helpful to residents in Falmouth. A link to the document will appear on the FCC web page. In addition to comments on this draft, the FCC recommended that the final document use a standardized format suitable for future FCC informational bulletins.

New Projects

The members discussed potential new projects for fiscal year 2008-2009. These projects would form the basis of the annual work plan presented to the Town Council in the fall. Ideas generated by the discussion included additional work on invasive species, a program dealing with yardscaping principles and practices, research on the number and type of easements held on town lands, and a variety of proposals dealing with water quality. Lissa will organize these ideas into a draft work plan that can be discussed at the FCC meeting in September.

Membership

The FCC is still short one member. The nature of the skills and interests needed in the new member were considered and it was decided to ask several people in the community for their recommendations concerning individuals who might meet those requirements and also be willing to serve.

Subcommittee Discussions and Reports

Open Space – Mel Dickenson

- The Committee is planning a Green Exposition for late October. The Expo would bring together 15-20 community groups working on conservation issues in order to stimulate cooperation, sharing of ideas, communication and public outreach. The Expo would include food and activities as well as booths for each exhibitor.
- A large parcel adjacent to the recently purchased Buck property in NW Falmouth may be available. The parcel is contiguous with existing protected land in Windham and would help maintain the size and continuity of open space in this part of the community.
- The Town should hear from LMF in the next few weeks concerning how much funding LMF will provide for the Greenbelt Project.

- There is some concern that the proposed expansion of the Portland Jetport could be put on hold or cancelled due to high fuel costs. If so, this would eliminate the proposed wetland mitigation plan worked out on town lands in Falmouth. Mitigation banking generates income for future open space purchases by selling conservation easements on properties have high natural resource value.

Invasive Species – Caleb Hemphill

- The bittersweet that was pulled up and cut by volunteers last spring at Mackworth Island has largely grown back. It is likely that a contributing factor was that the stumps of bittersweet vines were not dabbed with herbicide the day they were cut.
- The proposed fact sheet on invasive species might follow a similar format to the yardscaping fact sheet in that it would mainly refer homeowners to existing sources of information found elsewhere.

Liaison Discussions and Reports

FCC – Caleb Hemphill

The Falmouth Conservation Corps volunteers who participated in the trail building day at River Point numbered about 12. A trail was cleared that follows the perimeter of the property and provides beautiful views of the Presumpscot River, the mouth of the East Branch, the fields at River Point and the adjoining wetlands.

LPAC – Lissa Robinson

The consultants working on the Natural Ordinance Review project will develop ordinance language that reflects the conclusions of the wetlands and vernal pool policy reports approved by CDC/CPAC. CPAC has been dissolved and the committee now working on this issue is the Land Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC).

Energy – Mel Dickenson

The newly formed Green Ribbon Commission on Energy and Climate Change has conducted three official meetings so far as well as weekly organizational meetings. A web site that facilitates the exchange of ideas and information between members of the Commission and Falmouth residents is under discussion.

Next Steps

- The next meeting of the Commission will be held on Monday, September 8. There are no meetings planned for July and August.
- Lissa Robinson will prepare a draft plan for next year's projects based on tonight's discussion.
- Sean Mahoney and Mel Dickenson will solicit recommendations for potential FCC members from other Falmouth residents who may have knowledge of individuals with the skills and interests needed by the Commission.
- Gary Fogg will incorporate the comments of FCC members made at tonight's meeting into the final draft of the yardscaping fact sheet and standardize the format in a way that can be used for other FCC informational bulletins.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

Submitted by Gary Fogg