

**Hanover Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
August 10, 2011**

Members present: Ruth Bleyler (scribe), Ed Chamberlain, Doug McIlroy, Ray Hogue, Michael Mayor, Anne Morris, Judith Reeve.
Also in attendance: Vicki Smith (staff), Mark Buck and Brian Riordan (Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association)

1. Current Business

Followup on 33 Partridge Rd. proposed site: Bruce Williamson will build the driveway entrance the long route along the larger wetland, thus avoiding passing through a smaller wetland. No action required.

2. Resource Stewardship

Balch Hill management plan draft is moving along, has been approved by the Hanover Conservancy and sent to NRCS. Commission is providing more money to Hanover Conservation Council for Ben Hudson's work.

Hayes property: A gate along the stone wall has been built by the adjoining property that opens into planted shrubs. There is no conservation easement as yet. Judith questioned if we knew where the property line is.

3. Administrative Business

- **Commissioner resignation**

Judith Reeve has submitted her resignation to the Commission, effective in Sept. Judith's expertise and history will be missed on the Commission.

- Michael Mayor is September minutes taker
Anne Morris is October minutes taker

4. Committee Reports

- **Open Space Committee**

A forest management plan for the Town Forest has been written and boundaries need to be drawn. Ray Hogue has spoken to the Upper Valley Land Trust re: potential use of the Mill Gardens property which would be a valuable addition to town parks and use. Vicki recommended talking to Julia.

- **Trails Committee**

Boy Scout project: Teddy Garaghty who lives adjacent to Hayes property is eager to do an Eagle Scout project in neighborhood. Possibilities would be to build bridge from Woodcock to Etna Highlands wetland, which abuts the Hayes property. Vicki has found a path from the wetland to the Hayes property that would need a bog bridge. The trail and bridge through the wetland between Woodcock and Partridge is not enough effort to justify the Eagle Scout project, but there may be more to work that could be done on Hayes. Doug

asked for input. Ed suggested making trail signs and/or cleanup of the property. Vicki suggested a more defined route through Apple Orchard. Some improvement may be needed for vehicles and pedestrians to cross the wet area above the library. Public Works might do the work if the design is prepared. A wetlands permit would be needed for a bridge from Woodcock and perhaps through Orchard. Vicki noted that projects off conservation land need to be cleared with Jonathan and Julia.

Rinker Tract: The bike committee looked for trails in place of planned closed trail. Doug received a proposal to keep the trail open for a trial period of 1 – 2 years. If the trail is closed, it may need to be erased since only signage would be ineffectual. The best time to close it would be in winter. Doug suggested putting up signs now saying trail will not be there next year. There was a lengthy discussion concerning the appropriateness of the trail in a sensitive area with Mark Buck and Brian Riordan. Ed pointed out that we always request minimizing impact on wetlands. The Conservation Commission purchased land with money from the State for specific reasons and use for biking is counterproductive. The State said it should be for conservation and recreation, but the Commission determines what kind of recreation. It's understood that most bikers obey the rules. The bike association and UVTA representatives understood the Commission's comments.

Ray and Michael proposed getting the biking community to provide their ideas. They should look for collaboration among biking groups to find an integrated loop with terrain variation, but understanding that Rinker is particularly sensitive. Although everyone recognizes that biking is a great activity and appropriate tracts can be found and be self-policing, using the land responsibly. Ed recommended revisiting property and look at alternatives. We should find out why bikers don't like alternative.

Further action: Doug and trails committee will work on alternative proposals. Vicki will meet with Mark and Brian to determine possible alternatives and use GPS to map the trails and contours. The alternatives will be presented at the next trails committee meeting. A recommendation will then be presented to the Commission at the next meeting.

The Hanover 250th Celebration Hike up Moose Mountain will be September 18th. Doug said advertising is planned for the Valley News and the 250 Committee.

The Goodwin Tract is open for mountain biking.

- **Biodiversity Committee**

There is an anonymous gift of \$500 to be a matched to provide replacement plantings for the barberry bushes around the town hall. William Desch, urban forester, will work on the south side of the town hall and replace the barberry with witchhazel. He does not want to disturb any plantings around the trees in front. The town will provide in-kind service in labor for the matching gift. Judy will meet with Desch, Julia and interested parties.

5. Approval of Minutes – July 11 and July 13, 2011

The minutes were reviewed and edits were made.

Judy moved to accept the minutes as amended of July 13 and Anne seconded; unanimous approval.

Ray moved to accept the minutes of July 11 as amended and Judy seconded; unanimous approval.

6. Other Business

A \$500 check has been received and people are still contributing to protection of the Storrs Farm.

7. Adjournment

Michael moved to adjourn and Ruth seconded; unanimous approval at 6:50 pm.