

HANOVER CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 12, 2011

Members: Bleyler, Chamberlain (chair), Hogue, McIlroy, Morris (recording), Trummel

Staff: J. Edwards, V. Smith

Public: M. Buck, B. Riordan (Upper Valley Mountain Bikers Assoc.); 9 Hanover school students

Called to order: 5:05 p.m.

Rinker Natural Area Mountain Bike Trail

McIlroy: Has been on three walks with others on the Rinker parcel to look for alternative routes to an existing bandit trail. Described a new route with 3 sidehill sections, at least 2 of which could be avoided. Recommended that notices be posted announcing that the existing trail will be closed, and recruiting volunteers to create a new trail, with the work to be done in the spring, to be finished by National Trails Day (first Saturday in June).

Chamberlain: Distributed a map of existing trails in the vicinity that are available to mountain bikers and hikers. The proposed trail is about ¼ of the total on the Rinker Natural Area, and about 1/100 of the length of trails on the Storrs and Oak Hill areas. Thus, closing the Rinker bandit trail to bikers is a trivial reduction of the available trails.

M. Buck: Much of the trail length available to mountain bikers lacks challenge. The short piece requested for biking through the Rinker Natural Area is a critical link to a challenging trail outside of the Natural Area. Bikers are asking for very little trail length on Rinker, and are proposing a trail that will be sustainable.

Trummel: Bandit bikers are poaching on territory where bikes are not allowed now.

Riordan: Wants no poaching, and to institute enforcement of trail usage. Proposes closing the section McIlroy suggests, rehabing the closed section back to its natural state, bridging a wetland, restricting bikes to the new section, and allowing foot traffic only on the rest of the Rinker trails (rehab and bridging to be done by the Mountain Bikers Assn.)

Morris: Wants to be able to close the new trail if use by bikers causes damage that is unacceptable to the Conservation Commission, and to see a meaningful change in biker culture so as to respect the parcel's conservation values.

McIlroy: As owners of the parcel, the Commission can close down trails at any time. As for biker culture, Dartmouth is already working to bring the various communities together.

Riordan: Is willing to take personal responsibility for enforcement.

MOTION: to approve relocation of the trail on the Rinker Natural Area as proposed by McIlroy (Hogue, seconded by McIlroy) UNANIMOUS

Stewardship of Town Conservation Land

Edwards: Vicki's 7-year analysis of Commission expenditures shows that the Commission has spent more money on land management that has been in its annual budgets. The town should not be spending money on maintenance out of the Conservation Fund.

Chamberlain: The cost of deferred activities should be added to the analysis. Smith, McIlroy and Morris agreed to create a list. The Commission needs more help from the Dept. of Public Works, although they do assist when they can.

McIlroy: We should collect statistics on usage of conserved land

Edwards: Suggested a base budget for 2012 the same as for 2011 (\$4700), a request for critical supplemental funding (\$1500), and a third section for deferred maintenance. Commission budget requests should be in Edwards' hand during the first week of December.

Smith: Placing conservation easements on, and establishing boundary surveys and boundary markings of, lands under protection of the Conservation Commission have been deferred for lack of funds. These activities are needed to insure appropriate protection of these properties. Additional funds for the commission budget will allow steady progress in these obligations for good stewardship.

Mink Brook Wooden Walkway

Two sections to bridge wet areas have been constructed by Arthur Gardner and family, and installed. **McIlroy** asked Vicki to send them a note of thanks.

Trescott Company Forest Management Plan

Chamberlain: reported on the public meeting at which the plan was presented. Was impressed by the focus on protecting the water reservoirs and removing invasive plants to improve the timber stands.

Morris: will draft a letter of support on behalf of the Commission

Ordinance #20

Chamberlain: Commission Chair must sign off on special permit activities on public lands under Commission supervision. Chamberlain intends do so on Wilson's Landing if the other town boards approve the FOHC project.

Morris: Agreed that the OS committee will review Appendix A of the ordinance (the list of parcels supervised by the Commission) against the list of special permit activities the Commission chair must approve or deny; develop recommendations to the Commission and Select Board on addition of recently acquired conservation lands to the Appendix; and rewording of Section 7B.

Winter Lecture Series

Smith: Proposed one or more public lectures, perhaps to complement the League of Women Voters Brown Bag noontime events. Suggestions were

1. invasives control along regional roadways
2. Rick van de Pol
3. Tom Wessels
4. Someone Dartmouth may be bringing to the area
5. Old house slide show, with emphasis on landscapes of the past and now

Vicki will contact Tom Wessels.

Open Space Committee Report

Morris: Problems with easement descriptions being difficult to interpret in 2010 have led to the following proposals, all agreed to by **Edwards:**

1. The Planning Board should not approve conservation or trail easements without consulting the Conservation Commission.
2. The OS Committee should submit for Commission consideration suggestions of conservation easements that do not accomplish conservation goals, or are too ambiguous to interpret, and thus might be given up by the town.
3. Vicki will do the monitoring on the group of properties at Mulherrin Farm development according to specific directions from **Edwards.**

Trails Committee Report

McIlroy: John Taylor expands the work capability for which we pay him by successfully engaging volunteer assistance. The bridge over Trout Brook on Indian Ridge was considered dangerous, so it has been dismantled.

Chamberlain: Maintenance of the Fullington Farm trail along the river bank has been neglected, and is now overgrown with brush.

McIlroy: Agreed to remind John Taylor, who is responsible.

Biodiversity

The Commission needs a member on this committee to serve as chair. **Trummel** will consider the possibility. The Commission should thank Bill Desch for quick action on the barberry removal around the municipal building.

Meeting Minutes

MOTION: to approve August 10 minutes (Morris, seconded by Bleyler) UNANIMOUS

MOTION: to approve Sept. 14 minutes (Chamberlain, seconded by Bleyler) UNANIMOUS

Other Business

The Commission approved spending \$100-200 for new trails signs to be made by the NH penitentiary.

Adjournment

MOTION: to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. (Morris, seconded by Chamberlain) UNANIMOUS