

**HANOVER CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2011
Meeting commences at 5:00pm
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Members present: Ed Chamberlain, Ray Hogue (reporting), Doug McIlroy, Michael Mayor, Anne Morris, **also**, and Vicki Smith (staff) and Athos Rassius (Select Board representative).

Discuss about improvements to and deferred maintenance on town-owned conservation lands:

Vicki went over the spreadsheet titled “Town Owned Conservation Lands” . In the spreadsheet she identified proposed improvements to the various parcels and ranked them as high, medium and low – with many of the proposed improvements relating to deferred maintenance and she indicated that initially addressing these items would be less costly once a program of periodic maintenance was enacted. From this spreadsheet Vicki will determine budgeted amounts for the initial cure of the deferred maintenance and for periodic maintenance.

Ed indicated that the process of reviewing the town owned conservation lands was proposed by Jonathan Edwards in order to develop a budget item that could become a DPW budget line item. Ed also suggested that Vicki seek input from Doug regarding the trails work.

Vicki indicated that the newly-acquired Piper Lane and Hayes Upper Meadow lands are not on the spreadsheet, but will be included.

Ray asked what the timeline was and it was indicated that the budget process starts soon and Jonathan would like something by December 1, 2011.

Resource Stewardship:

a.) Winter Lecture Series: *Vicki* mentioned she had contacted Tom Wessels about doing a 90 minute slide presentation on “Reading the Forested Landscape”, “Reading the Granite Landscape”, or “The Myth of Progress”. Vicki will look to book the event for Tuesday of the second week of February in the Howe Library or the Black Center.

Ray asked about a budget and Vicki indicated that the honorarium would be \$400 plus travel reimbursement, with Tom coming from Putney, Vermont.

b.) Balch Hill Forest Management Plan: Balch Hill is co-owned by three entities – Dartmouth College, the Town of Hanover, the Hanover Conservancy, who have all contributed to the cost of preparing a forest management plan update to that section of the Balch Hill Management Plan.

Doug indicated that the forest management plan is a replacement chapter for the pre-existing management plan and it has already been submitted to the NRCS in order to secure a grant. The forest management plan includes a major timber cut on the portion owned by The Conservancy

in the northwest portion which involves the cutting of the pines in an attempt to promote the growth of hardwoods that would not ultimately impinge on the view-shed in the manner of the pines. Part of the plan involves creating a log landing on that portion owned by the Conservation Commission and the creation of a log-skidding trail across Town land to the landing.

Alternatives to the proposed trail and log landing were discussed, such as leaving the logs in place to create habitat, it was noted that if the logs were removed they would likely provide an income source that could approximately offset the cost of felling.

Anne moved to endorse the forest management plan, including the permission by the Conservation for the creation of a log landing and related trail on its portion of Balch Hill, with the net cost to be covered entirely by The Conservancy. **Michael** seconded. Vote: 5 for; none against.

c.) Greensboro Ridge Inventory:

Doug indicated that this property, owned by The Conservancy with the Town of Hanover holding the conservation easement, has recently been the subject of a natural resource inventory that reports the existence of three vernal pools and that one of the pools has been designated to be visited by a new trail and **Doug** thought this was fine. **Doug** indicated he would help scout for the creation of more trails on the property.

Open Space Committee: **Anne** discussed the issue of hunting on the upper portion of the Hayes and King Sanctuary property in Etna. **Doug** said there are two deerstands on the far side of the 4 acre property. **Anne** indicated that given that the overall property is now a bird sanctuary that people are naturally drawn to and that could create an unsafe situation during hunting season. It was indicated that the Selectboard was hoping to receive a recommendation regarding hunting on the property. **Anne** and **Ed** have crafted some policy recommendations in the form of a No Hunting Policy and it was decided that these two policy recommendations along with a third that would be developed in such a manner as to allow for limited days of hunting each season, would be forwarded to the Selectboard – but since the Selectboard would not be able to consider these policy recommendations until after the hunting season for this year was over, whatever policy the Selectboard chooses will not go into effect until next year.

Trails Committee: **Doug** said that the new bike trail in the Rinker tract had been marked on the ground and its development is on track and **Doug** suggested Trails Day 2012 as the termination date for the Bandit Trail. **Doug** indicated that the Marshall Brook Trail is to be used by snowmobiles. **Doug** said that Jonathan Edwards wants new, updated trail maps. **Vicki** said that Dartmouth may agree to print the new trail maps if it is free rather than charged for currently. **Doug** said that The Conservancy has offered to print the maps if they can put their logo on it. **Doug** opined that the trail maps should be charged for so as to make them less of a throw-away item.

Doug said that he felt much of the trails signage is posted too high and is too big and visually obnoxious, and presented a counterpoint in the form of brown wooden signs with routed letters painted in yellow and posted hip high and contain no branding. **Vicki** indicated that the signs are

posted high at most entrances in order to avoid snowplows and snow drifts and that the more attractive wooden signs with routed letters tend to attract theft.

Biodiversity Committee: There will be a January meeting.

October 12, 2011 Conservation Committee Minutes: *Michael* motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Second: *Ray*. Vote: 5 for; none against.

Anne motioned to adjourn; Second: *Ed*. Vote: 5 for; none against. Meeting adjourned at 7:04pm.