

OFFICIAL
AS OF 3/5/08

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
1/02/08
MEETING MINUTES**

PRESENT: Tim Johnson Chair excused, Steve Couture Vice Chair, Cindy Robertson Member, James Walter Member, Daniel Pike Member, David Hess Member, David Ross Town Council Rep, Dena Vaudrien Member

CALL TO ORDER: 7:03pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: James Walter motioned to approve the meeting minutes of December 5, 2007, Daniel Pike by and vote unanimously

PUBLIC INPUT:

APPOINTMENTS:

Beaver Brook – James Danish, Keach & Nordstrom

James Danish, Keach Nordstrom – I am here representing Scott Bussiere. The last time I was here I thought we had all come to an agreement that this would be a conservation easement. Based on the standards we need to have a conservation easement. The easement would now be 26 acres instead of 24 acres. When we presented the project we were under the understanding that the parcel of land to the north was held by the town, this is still the case until the 9th of this month then it will change hands. It was my understanding that conservation commission was not interested in holding the easement at only 24 acres. But when the parcel to the north was brought up that made the easement more appealing. Ultimately the wetland area land alone is 46 acres before the buffers. Once you add the buffers it could potentially be upwards of 60 acres. We would like an explanation as to why the conservation commission decided to rescind their motion.

Cindy Robertson – When you presented before you were confident that the Town owned that parcel. The town did come back and say they did own it but it will be transferring hands on the January 9.

Steve Couture – The town cannot retain ownership of this parcel they must return it due to not being taken properly due to back taxes. We did step back due to the gray area of the ownership of this parcel.

Scott Bussiere – I understand that you do not want to hold a small parcel but if you look at the map you see that there is a lot of wetlands that you will already own. You do have a major corridor of wetlands that you will own.

Cindy Robertson – Just because they are wetlands does not mean that we would own and we have concerns about what exactly will happen once ownership changes hands.

James Danish – I do understand but the dynamic of holding the easement has not changed. By you rescinding your motion we have 3 permits that have fallen by the wayside. Ultimately we have a 30-day appeal process and now have our wetlands process from DES. Maryann Tilton from the state that she will be sending a letter that

Scott Bussiere – Why would you not want a corridor?

Steve Couture – I think Cindy made a good point. But also we have responsibility beyond that. We have to make sure that everything is being followed to the letter.

James Danish – You accepted it and then rescinded it under no dynamic change.

Cindy Robertson – We made our decision based on information that we had at the time and it was later brought to our attention that the land to the north was not going to be owned by the town.

Steve Couture – This project still can move ahead without us holding the easement but you would need mitigation.

David Ross – We cannot accept an easement without a public hearing. In the eyes of conservation 26 acres is not a large area. For us to accept it is not wise.

James Danish – So there are no way that you will accept that easement even with the north parcel and all of the wetlands.

David Hess – In the discussion we had stated that the 26 acres was not sufficient. Then it was brought up that the town owned the parcel to the north due to size of the two pieces of land. If you can put it back together as a package I would consider it.

James Danish – It was never a done deal that the parcel to the north was going to be town owned.

David Ross motioned to accept the proposal to hold the easement of 26-acre parcel as proposed by Beaver Brook Development seconded by James Walter.

David Ross – I will be voting against my own motion but it must be voted on.

Cindy Robertson – I agree with David Hess about the understanding that the town owned that parcel.

6 no 1 abstains. Motion does not pass.

University Heights – Timber Harvesting Plan – Jeff Byrd, 3A Development –

Jeff Byrd – Quickly on the history it is 380 acres and 124 are in conservation easements. Phase One of our roads are constructed. This is bulk of the easement over here with 64 acres. What we would like to do now, selective harvesting not just in our conservation land but also in our residential and commercial lands. This is a good time. We would like to cut 97 acres in the conservation land and another 40 acres in our land and this would be selective clearing. We actually discussed this before with this board I believe along with DES. We worked very hard to make sure we could do this. We have cleared some significant acres in the past and this has been put off. We have time right now that is available to begin this process. In the easements you will see that it talks about a licensed forest management plan. It is more that just harvesting timber. I spoke with Lori Sommer from DES and told her that we wanted to select certain trees. We do not want to clear the land. We would need a letter from the conservation commission stating their approval with this plan. If you are in favor of this it is a selective timber harvest.

Chris Dunn - We are probably looking at about 35% of the basil area. I have been doing this for years. I do not have a license but I am a third generation logger. It was a surprise to me that this has not been done. This is the least intrusive time to do it. Between the constructions, the large amount of work being done and the soils. I do promote starting to do this now. I am sure we could enlist someone to help out by walking the land while the work is being completed.

Daniel Pike – Speaking on a personal level I am not impressed with the land clearing that has already been done. Would we have you guarantee that that would not happen again.

Jeff Burd – This would not be a clear cut. We would go in and harvest the timber that is work money. This is a selective harvest.

David Hess – the language in B2 says the improvements and maintenance. I do not see a forestry plan.

James Walter - Basically you want us to by pass the forestry plan and grant you permission to selective harvest. I think the reason it states that you need a plan is so it is done correctly.

Chris Dunn - There is a handbook that is basically a guide to follow to do this correctly. There are very different management plans that are tailored to different things. The just want to go in and do a selective harvest just one time.

David Ross – If some of this property is in current use that will present a problem for me. I do not want to change the use of property.

Steve Couture – I want a forest management plan. We are responsible for this land and I want to know exactly what will be going on. I do have concerns and I would want a lot more detail. I appreciate the fact that you came to us and presented what you want to do and I believe we need a lot more detail.

David Hess – You have the easements so why didn't you put a forestry plan together and more forward from their.

Jeff Burd – I believe we still own the land and we are managing the forest. I don't disagree with needing more information. But I know that we have had Chris Dunn working on this for a long time but I don't really know what a forester will bring to the table. To have to wait would be an unfortunate delay to us right now.

Chris Dunn – What I am going to do is get a forester and tell him exactly what I am going to do and he will basically write exactly what I tell him to write. The basis for us being here tonight is that we do not have a plan, but we want to go in and do a responsible selective harvest of the timber. A forester would come back with a report just like this.

David Hess – You will have to get DES approval on your forestry plan.

Cindy Robertson – Hypothetically if it was not done correctly and someone came to us and asked how we approved this without a plan We would then say that they represented to us and we didn't think they needed it. I would like a formal plan.

Daniel Pike – I would also like to see a plan by a forester.

Steve Couture – We would like to see a plan and would like you to come back with the plan. We are not against the cutting of trees but we would like to see a formal plan in place before the cuts were to happen.

Jeff Burd – We have no issue working with you and understand where you are coming from.

Steve Couture – We want a definite plan as to what is going to happen on the easement and the property. We would like to see the haul road and skid road we would like to see if we could utilize these make permanent trails. We hold this easement for the purpose of recreation. A formal plan would help us to see everything that we want to see.

COMMISSION REPORT:

1. Open Space Subcommittee –

David Hess – Efforts with Quimby Mountain have been delayed due to the holidays and some other personal issues of a committee member. I have been in talks with the owner of the river parcel. But the owner has concerns about using

the other parcel for recreational use. I also found another access to the property on the river.

2. ***Kiwanis Trail Initiative – Letter of Support***

Steve Couture – They have been focused on extending the trail by Heads Pond. They are looking for a letter of Support for this project.

James Walter motioned to draft a letter of support for the Kiwanis Trail Initiative
Dena Vaudrien Seconded Voted unanimously

3. ***Cost of Community Services –***

Steve Couture – I am waiting for the quadrant from the Police Department and once we have that we will figure out the numbers.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Reviewed all correspondence

OTHER:

CIP – Went well \$50,000 was voted unanimously by CIP Committee

Growth Management Meeting 1/29/08 – Phil Herr will be presenting and speaking on growth management.

AJOURNMENT:

James Walter Motioned to adjourn at 9:07pm Cindy Robertson Seconded by Voted unanimously

Respectfully Submitted

Jodi Pinard
Conservation Commission