

Jaffrey Conservation Commission

Minutes

July 29, 2009

Present: **Jim Bearce**
Nora Barton Bryant
John O. Field, Chair
Carolyn D. Garretson
Bill Graf
Pat Weiner, Alternate

Absent: **Ron Rogstad, Alternate**
Kathy Batchelder, Selectmen's representative

In attendance: **Kenneth G. Geraghty**
Brenda Bhatti

PRELIMINARY

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM, with **Carolyn D. Garretson** as scribe.
2. JOF welcomed the Commission's guest, **Peter Throop**, Project Director of the Monadnock Conservancy's Community Conservation Partnership (#5 below).
3. **Minutes** of the Commission's last meeting, held on **June 24, 2009**, were reviewed and approved with minor changes.
4. **Comments from the Chair**

Highlights of the month include progress on formatting the Commission's financial statements. There is more to discuss on this, however.

The request for 2010 funding of the Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Fund (LACRF) has been submitted to the Town Manager. While only \$5,000 is being sought for the coming year, it is hoped that in six years (by the end of 2015) LACRF will have amassed \$145,000 from a combination of town appropriations and transfers from the Commission's land use change tax (LUCT) revenues.

The Natural Resource Inventory (**NRI**) completed in June and **LACRF** together constitute the first two legs of a four-legged stool for future land acquisition and preservation in Jaffrey. The other two legs – establishment of an **Open Space Committee** and creation of an **Open Space Plan** – are in draft stage. The convergence of these four developments creates the opportunity for Jaffrey to participate in the Monadnock Conservancy's **Community Conservation Partnership**. Hence the invitation to Peter Throop to discuss the Partnership with the Commission.

PRIORITY ITEMS

5. Jaffrey's Participation in the Community Conservation Partnership (MCCP) Sponsored by the Monadnock Conservancy

JOF again introduced Mr. Throop and suggested that he provide an overview of MCCP and its first round in five Cheshire County towns. Principal topics for the discussion to follow will be (1) matching MCCP to Jaffrey's needs to establish whether there is a basis for collaboration and (2) preparation for a public information meeting in Jaffrey, tentatively scheduled for October of this year, to introduce MCCP to a wider town audience.

Mr. Throop presented the overview, emphasizing experience first in Swanzey (2004-2006) and then in Westmoreland, Alstead, Walpole, Gilsum, Surry, and Keene (2007-2009). Expansion of the Partnership to 6-8 new towns is projected for late 2009 and early 2010.

Mr. Throop also discussed MCCP's mission, which is to strengthen the capacity of towns in the Monadnock region to identify and protect those natural resources and special places important to their rural character and quality of life. MCCP offers a combination of strategic planning and technical assistance that emphasizes training, conservation planning, community awareness and education, and implementation of conservation strategies. It is a mechanism for helping towns to accomplish their land preservation goals with professional backstopping.

The Commission discussed MCCP's relevance to Jaffrey and the proposed public meeting at great length. It was not possible, in the time available, to reach closure on either topic. Uncertainty concerning the October meeting – its objectives, intended audience, and key issues to be posed – persisted to the end, resulting in no decision to proceed. The Commission agreed to exchange emails in the ensuing week to share thoughts and crystallize options. MCCP will be on the agenda for the Commission's meeting in August so that the discussion may resume.

6. COMMISSION FINANCES

CDG passed out a new set of spreadsheets for the Conservation Fund and its component projects. Given the lateness of the hour, it was not possible to review these documents. Review and any decisions based on it were postponed to the Commission's next meeting in August.

Discussion focused on the relative merits of using an accounting vs. tracking format for the spreadsheets. Resolution will be sought at the meeting in August.

Note was made of the fact that no LUCT revenues have been received by the Conservation Fund thus far in 2009 and that no revenues are currently in the pipeline.

It was moved by JOF and seconded by NBB to reimburse PW \$48 for the wonderful new Conservation Commission banner used, for the first time, at Riverfest on July 25, 2009.

7. OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

None of the other items on the agenda for this meeting were discussed. Items for decision will carry over to the August meeting of the Commission. Information items are referenced in the Appendix below.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 10:42 PM.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission will be on Wednesday, **August 26, 2009**, 7 PM at the Town Offices.

APPENDIX: INFORMATION ITEMS

The following items on the agenda are listed here, as their inclusion was to get them into the minutes for future reference. Agenda items for discussion and decision are not included, as they will be on the agenda for the Commission's meeting in August.

8. Open Space Committee

JOF has drafted a proposal to the Selectmen for establishment of an Open Space Committee in Jaffrey. The proposal addresses rationale, composition, mandate, and accountability. It will be reviewed first by Jo Anne Carr and then by Mike Hartman before submission to the Selectmen. The draft has been circulated to members of the Commission and others for comment.

9. Children's Woods

Conservation easement: The Monadnock Conservancy is preparing the final easement deed. In addition to co-signing the document, Jaffrey may be asked to co-sign a **Memorandum of Understanding** on the responsibilities of each party under the easement.

10. Gray Goose Farm

On July 20, 2009, JOF met with a Jaffrey couple that is potentially interested in purchasing the 25-acre plot for a home and farm. The discussion focused primarily on the conservation easement held by the Commission.

11. High School Track Area

The School District is preparing to submit a Permit by Notification application to DES to replace the two damaged culverts along the stream exiting the small pond behind the tennis courts. JOF reviewed the application and signed it on behalf of the Commission on July 20, 2009. This project has been under discussion for more than a year.

12. Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Fund

On June 26, 2009, JOF submitted to the Town Manager the Commission's request for an appropriation in the 2010 town budget under the Capital Improvement Program. The request made is for the first year of a rolling six-year plan to fund LACRF from a combination of town appropriations and transfers from the Land Use Change Tax credited to the Conservation Fund.

13. Underwood/474 Great Road

Mr. C. Jerome Underwood responded by phone on July 2, 2009 to the Commission's letter of June 12 inviting the Underwood family to discuss preserving a portion of their 294 acres even if they decide to sell other parts. Mr. Underwood expressed a willingness to meet and was going to check with his son about an appropriate date.

14. Greene Family Property

The Greene family will meet in Jaffrey on July 25, 2009 to consider a range of issues concerning their property of 150 + acres west of Gilmore Pond Road. JOF has been invited to attend a meeting four days later between Sue Greene, Sue Hoey of USDA/Durham, and Anne McBride of the Monadnock Conservancy to exchange information regarding potential application of USDA's *Wetlands Reserve Program* to much of the Greene property.