

Jaffrey Conservation Commission Minutes Draft

Meeting held at Town Offices April 27, 2016

Present: Carolyn D. Garretson, Chair, Pam Armstrong, Nora Barton Bryant, William Graf, Charles Koch, Francis McBride, Tom Rothermel, Elizabeth Webster, Recorder, James C. Moore, Select Board Representative

Regrets: Nan Beiter, Patricia Weiner, Kathy Batchelder

Absent: Matthew Amadon, Michael George

Guests: Reuben Duncan, Jaffrey-Rindge School Superintendent

Jeffrey Clark Kevan, Jaffrey-Rindge School Board member

William Preston, Vice Chair, Rindge Conservation Commission

David Drouin, Chair, Rindge Conservation Commission

Richard Mellor, Rindge Conservation Commission

Brian Hotz, Vice President for Land Conservation, SPNHF

I. The meeting convened 7PM. Guests were introduced.

II. 100 Acre School District Property – Chair Garretson proposes a joint venture between the School District, the Conservation Commissions of Jaffrey and Rindge, and either SPNHF or the Monadnock Conservancy to protect this property for educational purposes.

Mr. Clark Kevan reviewed the current position of the School Board. The property is in the process of being appraised; the value of the portion in each township, as well as the value of the entirety needs to be determined. Additional considerations are the potential tax value as housing, balanced with the cost of infrastructure, and the value of timber harvest on a periodic basis. With that information, the School Board will discuss possible uses for the property: keeping it as is with a view toward eventual construction of a new school building, selling it for development, selling it to a land conservancy, or some combination of these options.

Mr. Hotz discussed the advantage of creating conservation areas proximal to school buildings for programmatic use, including having immediate access without the need for transportation. He also discussed the potential for LCHIP and Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) grants, which would help to recoup the costs. Mr. Hotz suggested that the School District retain the option to build a school in the future; that the Rail Trail, wetlands, river and proximity to other conserved lands provide excellent educational opportunities. He also felt that a co-operative venture between the Conservation Commissions of two towns and the School District would be viewed favorably by grantors. The surveys, titles, and evaluations could be paid for with grants, the

Conservation Commissions would accept responsibility for the stewardship fees. The plan needs to be proposed at the Town Meeting, but progress can be contingent upon receipt of the necessary grant funds. SPNHF or the Monadnock Conservancy would need to be the applicant and holder of the easement.

Superintendent Duncan outlined the need for an educational approach which engages students with the world outside the classroom, providing experience and thereby, intellectual excitement. He believes this property has the potential to be the kind of environment necessary for that exploration.

Mr. Mellor suggested that a resource assessment would be helpful in the preparation of the grant and the Town Meeting presentations. Additionally, it would be useful groundwork for student activities. It was proposed that the Conservation Commissions explore the possibility of having a survey of the land to determine the conservation value. This would also assist in grant applications.

Mr. Clark Kevan summarized by saying that the current condition of the school buildings is being reviewed, and the Committee needs to discuss retaining a portion of the property for a future building, as well as considering the value of housing development.

III. The minutes of March 23 were approved.

IV. Ongoing Items

A. CPCA trail clearing on Saturday, May 21 at 9 AM. All are welcome.

B. Saving Special Places Summary – CDG and BG reported upon workshops attended. BG learned that the Forest Service has made available a revised manual for Conservation Easements. CDG learned that all Town Forests should be under easements in order to be protected.

V. New Business– Charles Koch has been asked to prepare proposals for Forest Management Plans for Children’s Woods and Carey Park, CPCA, Monadnock Town Forest, Bixler Forest, and Lacey Road properties. The commission committed to develop Management Plans for these properties in 2016.

VI. The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM. The next meeting will be held on May 25, 7 PM at the Town Offices.