

Lyndeborough Conservation Committee meeting – 1-12-2015

In attendance: Sharon Akers, Mike Hasty, Heidi Kemmerer, Kurt Berna, Theresa Berna, Mike Decubellis

Minutes taken by Theresa Berna

Cemetery Expansion on Cemetery Rd.

- Cemetery committee wants to do some cutting behind the South Cemetery on cemetery road in order to clear land for the cemetery expansion. Presented as already approved by the selectman. Cemetery committee wants to hear our opinion. The proposal is to selectively cut in the 10 acres on the North side of the cemetery and the first few feet would be to expand the cemetery and for a place for the town to put their fill. The purpose would be for “good forestry, to improve the health of the stand, like weeding your garden” according to Ginny Christenton who is on the Cemetery committee; selling some of the trees to cover the cost of improving the access, stumping in the cemetery expansion area and to pay the forester. The cost is approximately \$1500 for the forester. The road next to the cemetery is known as a bar and gates road and would need to be improved for logging vehicles. Mike D. said that Joe Trudeau evaluated the adjacent Putnam conservation area to see if management would benefit – the money made would need to go back into the area. Hi conclusion was that for the most part the area was too wet and areas were not able to be crossed where they needed to cross. It is believed that it was more of an access issue. There were some important species mixes which are not commonly found in the area and it is old growth.
 - Should we look for that rare mix in the woods behind the cemetery?
 - Past residents have been very protective of those trees due to water issues and drainage which makes sense because the cemetery slopes downwards from the forest which is a buffer between it and the wet areas further back.
 - The cut has not been started and it would be good to walk the land. All they have done so far is flag the 10 acres. There are a bunch of red pines right where the access would be which are somewhat unusual
 - Mike D: any water way crossings? Sharron A.: none were seen just on the flagged boundaries but there may be some in the middle of the ten acres (Mike thought the map indicated this) and there are many in the adjacent Putnam pond area.
 - Kurt B. is there a trail system? Mike D. on the fish and game side in conservation land area there is.
 - Kurt B. Area to be cut is directly behind the cemetery, there is a very steep slope there.
 - Is there a common daytime to go walk the land? All weekends before the next meeting have time conflicts so that we will either have to explore it separately or after the next meeting

Woodmont Orchard Farm and Ranchlands Grant and Easement (Dave Milton property)

We need to set up public hearing to expend conservation funds. A \$30,000 commitment from Lyndeborough Conservation Commission was voted last meeting. . Here is a copy of the email explaining the funding details of the project from Ian McSweeney of the Russell Foundation, who is taking the lead in facilitating the easement with Dave Milton:

"I am unable to make tonight's meeting.

The \$30,000 would be going toward the match funds needed to secure and utilize the federal USDA/NRCS funds that are part of the Farmland Protection Program (formerly FRPP and now ALE). The land to be conserved with this \$30,000, USDA/NRCS funds, and to be raised and secured other funds would be the total David Milton holdings (Fitch Orchard) that David bought from Woodmont, which looks to be about 95 acres when 5 acres are excluded out around farmstead. The first attachment above is an aerial view, without property boundaries shown. The second is the appraisal report for 52 acres for house side of road (initial discussion was only for house side of road, but further discussion led to agreement to conserve total and I had appraiser reevaluate considering the total of about 95 acres, but only have that amendment in paper copy right now). The result was a similar per acre value (\$5,380) across the total, with potential for a slight premium in value for the land on the opposite side of the road from the house (view potential creates slight increase in value).

Thus on the high end (better to assume high than to assume low and end up short on funds) this project will have costs, noted below, and will need to raise and secure the total funds needed by August of 2016:

EXPENSES:

>Purchase price for conservation easement on total Milton lands (only excluding out about 5 acres around existing buildings) \$420,000 (full value of conservation easement is \$560,000, the difference represents a bargain sale that David will provide)

>Project costs (survey, title, second appraisal, legal, baseline, conservation easement drafting, grant applications, fundraising, and project management - does not include land trust stewardship and staff time – many of these fall to the holder of the conservation easement, but Russell Foundation would cover all but town's own legal costs and time involved in meetings and stewardship monitoring – thus taking the financial burden objection off the table) \$60,000

>INCOME:

>NRCS farm and ranchland protection program \$280,000

>Russell Foundation potential support (would cover project costs and potentially provide a challenge grant to help with private fundraising) \$60,000

>Town Conservation Commission \$30,000

>Potential grants from the following foundations I have had initial conversations with (would take application, but initial conversations indicate high potential of interest) \$20,000 1772 Foundation

> \$5,000 Milford Hospital Foundation

> \$10,000 NH Moose Plate

> \$20,000 LCHIP

Private fundraising potential \$30,000

This would leave about \$25,000 to fully fund

Let me know if you have other immediate questions.

Thanks,

Ian

Ian B. McSweeney Russell Foundation ian@russellfound.org “

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- He needs to show support of the town in the full amount of \$30,000 in order to submit the application and meet the requirements of the Farm and Ranchland grant.
 - Plan is to have the town be the easement holder.
 - We currently have a little over \$50,000 in the account.
 - Officially we need to give a commitment of \$30,000 to RF.
 - The commission again voted to continue its pledge of \$30,000 toward the conservation easement for David Milton's holdings (Fitch Orchard that David Milton bought from Woodmont) contingent upon the public's support at the hearing next month.
 - Ian and Mike D had a conversation and Russell Foundation knows that we have another very high priority project on the table that didn't come up until after we voted to support this project at the \$30,000 level. They need us to keep our commitment at this level so that they can meet the grant application requirements but will try to raise enough funds from other sources so that in the end when the funds are due, our funding level may be reduced.
 - Sharon to ask Kathleen Humphreys to post public hearing notice in the newspaper.
 - The hearing will be to discuss the project with the public and discuss our involvement. We need to explain that we are leveraging funds to accomplish a lot with a smaller percentage of the financing.
 - Public hearing to be scheduled for the second Thursday of next month, February 12th
 - Selectmen will need to be presented, and approve, the project funding and easement.
 - A representative will need to go to the selectman's meeting to present the project. Sharon will go to ask for time before the Selectmen after the Public Hearing. Time is of the essence
 - Ian will be asked to attend and do the presentation for the Selectman and be present at the Public Hearing.
 - Public notice should state “A public hearing on whether to expend money from the dedicated conservation fund for an easement on the former Woodmont Orchard property on Center Road owned by David Milton.”

Eagle Scout

- Eagle Scout: Hans Kemmerer – Had questions for the commission.
 - It would be great if he joined.
 - He is looking for a project. It was suggested that he create a trail in Curtis Dogwood State Forest.

- We discussed other ways to get kids involved.

Curtis Dogwood State Forest

- State Forest needs work. Large trees overshadowing dogwoods and they are dying out.
- It is unclear of who has the authority and can provide approval for Lyndeborough to create trails and manage the forest. That is state owned land but management of the land is quite unclear. Heritage commission is currently investigating the management.
- We need to ask permission to manage the forest and create trails.

Conservation funding

- The LCC voted to give a small donation to the PLC - \$25, SPNHF - \$50, and \$100 to NHACC

New Business – Another high priority conservation project

- Another high priority conservation project is on the table and significant funding will be required.
- We are unable to state publicly exactly what the project is so that we do not impact negotiations.
- Project is expected to be announced in January.
- Piscataquog Land Conservancy will be purchasing the land in fee.
- PLC will need fundraising in order to purchase the land and complete the project. They have already received several grants in support of the project, even before it has been announced publicly.
- Substantial funding will be required from the Lyndeborough Conservation fund.
- We will need to participate and be actively involved in the fundraising
 - Put articles in the Lyndeborough views to discuss project and ask for donations.
- This project is without question the highest priority conservation goal within the town. It is stated as a high priority goal within both the town's Master Plan and the Natural Resource Inventory.
- All members of the conservation commission were in agreement that this project should receive the highest priority possible and agreed to fund it as much as possible.
- Given that we have already committed \$30,000 to the Woodmont easement, we only have a balance of \$20,000 available to work with.
- PLC needs to have a commitment from the town very soon.
- It was unanimously voted that we would support this project with the remaining \$20,000 given the priority level of this project and that we would commit the \$20,000 to the PLC.
- After the project is made public by the PLC we will hold a public hearing to discuss our funding level and present it to the Selectmen.

End Meeting: 9:20pm