

DRAFT MINUTES

NEW DURHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

JANUARY 6, 2010

Chairperson Cathy Allyn called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Roll Call: Cathy Allyn (Chairman), Terry Jarvis (Selectmen's Representative), Bill Malay, Bob Craycraft (Alternate), Charles Berube (Vice-Chair), Paddy McHale

Others Present: Anna Boudreau, Nancy Lambert, David Allen

Strafford Rivers Conservancy: Anna Boudreau and Nancy Lambert gave an overview of the work of the Strafford Rivers Conservancy. They do advocacy and education around conservation issues, and accept and manage conservation easements within Strafford County or nearby. SRC is the primary easement holder on the property of Donald and Gail Holm on Kings Highway, a project the Conservation Commission helped to bring to fruition.

Nancy Lambert described the current effort of the SRC to develop conservation plans for the towns in the county that combine to make an integrated conservation plan for the county. David Allen said that would be very helpful to the Town's efforts to create a natural resource inventory and conservation action plan.

Anna Boudreau asked if the town had passed warrant articles allowing town money to be spent on projects outside the town, or on projects within the town in which the Town has no executory interest. The Commission agreed the town had not done these things. They felt it was too late to bring the issues before the March 2010 Town Meeting and agreed to work on them for 2011.

SRC Questionnaire: The Board reviewed the draft responses prepared by staff to the Strafford Rivers Conservancy questionnaire. They made a few additions and decided to continue consideration of it over time.

Woodward Payment: Charlie Berube moved to pay the bill from the Society for the Preservation of New Hampshire Forests for \$15,000 for transaction costs associated with the easement granted by Mr. Thomas Woodward on his property at Map 16, Lot 8-1. Paddy McHale seconded.

Terry Jarvis expressed uneasiness setting the precedent of paying a bill that had component subtotals different from the original estimate, even if there were no change in the total cost.

Cathy Allyn called for the vote. Malay, yes; Berube, yes; McHale, yes; Allyn, yes; Jarvis, no. Passed 4-1

Conservation Commission Association Dues: Cathy Allyn moved approval of payment of \$225 in dues to the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions. Bill Malay seconded. Unanimous.

McKenzie Property: The question raised is whether the Conservation Commission should move ahead and get a conservation easement placed on this property. It immediately abuts the Holm Conservation easement and it protects another major segment of Shaw's Pond shorefront. The Commission tried to estimate the costs involved. They questioned whether a survey would be needed. Staff David Allen checked the data base created by Cartographic Associates, Inc. as part of their redesign of the town tax maps and was able to identify a 1986 survey of the property. Bill Malay estimated that without needing a survey the cost for establishing an easement would probably be about \$3500, though he cautioned it could go slightly higher. Bill Malay will get a more precise cost estimate from Strafford Rivers Conservancy, and will check the deeds of this and abutting properties to clarify responsibility for maintenance of the roadway leading to the three shorefront properties.

Reimbursement of Meeting House Funds: Charlie Berube asked if there was going to be a warrant article at Town Meeting that would reimburse the Conservation Fund for the \$25,000 it had paid for the purchase of the Eldridge property that will be added to the Meetinghouse property. Terry Jarvis said the Board of Selectmen was preparing a warrant article that would move the \$25,000 from the 1772 Meetinghouse Restoration fund and the Municipal Land Acquisition Fund back into the Conservation Fund.

Roberts Property: This property has recently been foreclosed. It is on Old Route 11 and could provide road frontage and access for a large excavation pit that is currently landlocked, thereby making that lot suitable for subdivision and development. The Commission is concerned with that possibility because part of the property is sensitive shore land for the Ela River.

Mr. Craycraft said that some degree of additional protection for the river would be provided by following through with efforts initiated 6-8 years ago to designate prime wetlands in the Town. The Commission agreed by consensus to work toward a warrant article for Town Meeting 2011 to request DES designation of prime wetlands in the town.

Holm Easement: Bill Malay reported that he had recently completed an annual inspection of the Holm easement together with John Wallace, Land Agent for the Strafford Rivers Conservancy. In the process he discovered that some of the easement documentation is incomplete or ineffectively prepared in case of any future legal challenges. Mr. Malay is working with Mr. Wallace to get all the proper

documentation compiled. The Strafford Rivers Conservancy is the Executory Interest holder on the Holm property. The Town of New Durham is the primary Conservation Easement holder

Natural Resources Inventory: Commission members discussed the need for a Natural Resources Inventory. Bob Craycraft said the primary task was to synthesize a lot of information that has been collected by different sources over time and to combine it into a single useful and accessible book and GIS data. The Commission had requested funds in its 2010 budget for that purpose but the Budget Committee denied the request and suggested taking the funds from the Conservation Fund instead. Commission members opposed doing that, wanting to keep those funds for land acquisition. Cathy Allyn said she would lead an effort to raise the necessary funds from private contributions. David Allen agreed to draft a summary of the need for an inventory and description of how it will advance Conservation goals in town.

Town Report: Cathy Allyn will write the Conservation Commission segment for the Town Report. She collected input from Commission members.

Stormwater Management: Bob Craycraft reported on the work of the Planning Board to adopt a storm water management ordinance to improve protection against flooding and degradation of the water quality that is so important to the town's economy and tax base. He asked the Commission if it would co-sponsor a public education event on the subject for late spring or early summer. The Commission agreed by consensus to co-sponsor.

Red Oak, Next Meeting: Mike Speltz from the Forest Society will meet with the Commission on January 26 to update the group on efforts to protect the Red Oak Ridge properties and to discuss a warrant article for the 2010 Town Meeting to advance the project.

Minutes of December 8, 2009. The Commission corrected the first sentence of the minutes to read "Cathy Allyn, Chair". **Terry Jarvis moved approval of the minutes of December 8, 2009 as amended. Paddy McHale seconded. The motion was approved unanimously with no abstentions.**

Paddy McHale moved to adjourn at 9:47 PM. Terry Jarvis seconded. The motion was approved unanimously with no abstentions.

Respectfully submitted,

David Allen

Land Use Administrative Assistant Minutes approved as amended January 26, 2010.