

DRAFT MINUTES

NEW DURHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

JUNE 28, 2011

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

Roll Call: Cathy Allyn (Chair) (left at 7:10 PM), Charles Berube (Vice-Chair), Bill Malay, Paddy McHale, Ron Gehl (Alternate), Bob Craycraft (Alternate)

Members Excused: Marcia Clark

Others Present: Keith Fletcher (MMRG), Lorraine Drake (MMRG Board)

MMRG Status Report: Chair Allyn introduced Keith Fletcher, Executive Director of the Moose Mountains Regional Greenway. She welcomed Lorraine Drake who is the New Durham representative to the Board of MMRG. Ms. Allyn excused herself from the meeting for family reasons and passed the chair to Vice Chair Charlie Berube.

Mr. Fletcher updated the Commission on the work of the MMRG. He focused on the status of federal funding programs for purchase of land or easements for conservation purposes. He told the Commission that the guidelines for the Wetlands Reserve Program have been tightened to limit the funding to properties where significant remediation is needed. In the past the funds have paid for properties with only modest restoration requirements.

He reported that the federal tax incentives for donation of all or part of the assessed value of a conservation easement remain in place until December 31, 2011 but the status after that is dependent on budget politics in Washington and therefore totally unpredictable.

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department has some funds for acquisition of wildlife habitat. The federally funded Ranch and Farmland protection program can purchase land or easements on working farms or "soils of local significance" even if they are not currently working farms. There is a plan for federal funding for a New England regional effort to support management of land to protect or recreate habitat for the Cottontail rabbit which requires transitional land for habitat: thick brush or shrubs. Most of the range in New England and New York is either forested or field.

Mr. Fletcher reported that local initiatives approving the sale of bonds for conservation acquisition were having significant success in New England and across the country. The key factors in success are well worded warrant articles, clear purpose for the funds, and tax increases that average less than \$40 per year.

Commission members discussed several specific properties and discussed potential strategies for communicating conservation needs and plans with the public.

Simard Shoreland Permit: The commission reviewed the application of xxx Simard for creating a paved parking area on property at 356 Merrymeeting Road. Acting Chair Charlie Berube asked Ron Gehl to sit for Cathy Allyn.

The Simards propose to create a 1000 square foot paved parking area by removing part of the hill between the road and their house. The parking area will meet Merrymeeting Road for most of the width of the lot. Drainage of the parking area will utilize an existing culvert under Merrymeeting Road that flows into the lake which will be replaced with a new and somewhat larger culvert. The plan will increase impervious surface from 12% to 26% of the lot.

Commission members expressed serious concerns about the plan and its impact on Merrymeeting Lake water quality. They are concerned that the proposal will increase both the volume and velocity of runoff into the lake. Members think the proposal violates town driveway regulations, impermeable surface requirements, steep slope, and stormwater management regulations.

Ron Gehl moved to recommend to DES that they deny the permit on the basis that the proposal exceeds the limits of impermeable surface and violates the impermeable surface, steep slope and stormwater management provisions of the town Zoning Ordinance, and the driveway regulations of the town. Paddy McHale seconded. Approved unanimously.

Enforcement: The commission discussed several issues that make town involvement in the enforcement of Shoreland Protection issues difficult.

New/Old Business: Bob Craycraft asked the Commission to schedule a date for a presentation by Forrest Bell Engineering on the Natural Resource Inventory. The commission agreed to invite them to present at the August Conservation Commission meeting. David Allen asked the Commission if it wanted to confirm the picnic/monitoring event discussed last month for Devil's Den. The Commission agreed to schedule the event at the end of summer in cooperation with the Recreation Department.

Paddy McHale moved to adjourn at 9:36 PM. Bill Malay seconded. Approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

David Allen
Land Use Administrative Assistant