

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
27 AUGUST 2013**

PRESENT: Commission members Paddy McHale (Chair), Charlie Berube, Bob Craycraft (Alternate), Bill Malay (Alternate); Recording Secretary Amy Smith.

OTHERS PRESENT: Keith Fletcher of Moose Mountain Regional Greenways, Rod Thompson, Charles and Doris Healey.

Chair McHale called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and designated Mr. Malay and Mr. Craycraft to sit in as voting members.

Discussion – Keith Fletcher & Rod Thompson

Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Thompson introduced themselves to the Commission and the audience. Mr. Thompson gave the Commission a presentation accompanied by a slide show regarding his property which consists of approximately 200 acres. Mr. Thompson stated approximately 60 acres of his property are on the New Durham side with the remainder of the acreage in Farmington, where he resides. Mr. Thompson stated the property was laid out in 1753 and the Farmington portion of his property has been in his family since the late 1790's. Mr. Thompson noted the New Durham portion was acquired in 1874.

Mr. Thompson stated most of the property is above the 1000' elevation level. Mr. Thompson noted interesting features about the property such as 4.5 to 5 linear miles of stonewall, two cellar holes, a large stone pile, intermittent streams that are headwaters of the Mad River and potential vernal pools. Mr. Thompson showed the Commission and audience slides of these features.

Mr. Thompson then informed the Commission of his thoughts on a potential conservation easement. Mr. Thompson stated there would be an 8 acre section that would have no restriction on it, there would also be an area of land around his home in Farmington that would be excluded. Mr. Thompson noted all the New Durham land would be kept as a 'natural area'. Mr. Thompson stated the owner would be allowed to remove 10 cords of firewood per year for their personal consumption. Mr. Thompson also stated the property is posted but would allow small groups, such as school field trips, to tour the property under the supervision of the Farmington Conservation Commission, New Durham Conservation Commission or Moose Mountain Regional Greenways. Mr. Thompson noted motorized vehicles would not be allowed except for the owner's personal use or search and rescue vehicles in the event someone gets lost.

Mr. Thompson then briefly reviewed goals enumerated in the Town of New Durham's Master Plan which, he felt, the proposed conservation easement met nicely.

Chair McHale asked if there is any evidence of grave sites by the old cellar holes. Mr. Thompson stated not that he is aware of. Mr. Berube asked if a protected species study had been done. Mr. Fletcher stated no. Mr. Fletcher continued to state he wouldn't expect to find anything exceptional; however, he would like to check into the vernal pools Mr. Thompson mentioned in his presentation.

Mr. Fletcher passed out a draft budget listing the estimated costs involved with putting a property into a conservation easement. Mr. Fletcher also explained the Land Trust Alliance procedure. Mr. Fletcher noted the Thompson conservation easement would be the first easement for Moose Mountain Regional Greenways. Commission members reviewed the draft budget. Mr. Fletcher noted that he had already spoken with the Farmington Conservation Commission and indicated they pledged \$2,500.00. Mr. Fletcher stated, in retrospect, he did not ask them for enough money at the time as he did not have all the figures. Mr. Fletcher also stated the contribution made by Mr. & Mrs. Thompson is the largest of any land owner that he has worked with.

Chair McHale stated he thought Mr. Thompson did a great job making his case for a conservation easement but the Commission did need to do their due diligence and do some more research. Audience members Mr. & Mrs. Healey also agreed Mr. Thompson had an impressive presentation. Mr. Thompson thanked the Commission for their time.

Review of Expedited Review Wetlands Permit for Charles & Doris Healey -36 South Shore Road- Map 120 Lot 015

Commission members reviewed the application for an Expedited Review Wetlands Permit for Charles & Doris Healey -36 South Shore Road- Map 120 Lot 015. Chair McHale asked the Healeys if they are basically looking to restore the property to the way it was before the erosion. Mr. Healey stated yes. Mrs. Healey noted the peninsula has been there since the late 1940's early 1950's. Mr. Berube asked the Healeys if they had a Grant of Right. Mr. Healey stated he received a Grant of Right from the Governor and Council in 1996. Mr. Berube asked the Healeys if they use fertilizer. Mr. Healey stated he only uses lime. Chair McHale stated he did not see any issues with the application. Commission members agreed. **Mr. Berube made a motion to authorize the Chair to sign the Expedited Review Wetlands Permit for Charles & Doris Healey -36 South Shore Road- Map 120 Lot 015. Mr. Malay seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.** The Healeys thanked the Commission.

Potential Conservation Land – Map 209 Lot 046 (Town Owned)

Ms. Smith stated she was asked by the Selectmen to get the opinions of the Planning Board and Conservation Commission regarding a 54 acre parcel of land on Shaw's Pond as to whether they thought it should be retained by the Town as conservation land. Ms. Smith stated the parcel is

currently owned by the Town due to non-payment of taxes and was told the timeframe for the former owner to redeem the property has lapsed. Ms. Smith also noted the Board of Selectmen had received an offer from an individual who wished to purchase the property but the Selectmen determined the amount offered was below market value. Ms. Smith also stated the Planning Board had discussed the parcel at their 20 August 2013 meeting and voted to send a memo to the Selectmen recommending the property be preserved as conservation land. Ms. Smith read the section of the Planning Board's 20 August 2013 meeting minutes pertaining to Map 209 Lot 046. Commission members reviewed the information handed out by Ms. Smith.

Mr. Malay gave a brief history of the parcel and also the abutting Holm's property which already has a conservation easement. Commission members asked Mr. Fletcher for advice on surveying and legal work. Commission members agreed a memo should be sent to the Selectmen stating they agree with the Planning Board and feel that the land should be preserved as conservation land. Commission members also agreed to investigate the most appropriate way of conserving the land. Chair McHale stated he does think the project is worthwhile but wants to ensure the Commission does not over commit its funds. Mr. Fletcher stated if the Commission decides they would like Moose Mountain Regional Greenways to be easement holders let him know as soon as possible so he can set up a site walk for the MMRG Board to review the property.

Review of Wetlands Application – John & Holly Babcock – 23 Elly Point Road – Map 111 Lot 015

Commission members reviewed the Wetlands Permit application for John & Holly Babcock – 23 Elly Point Road – Map 111 Lot 015. Commission members had no issues with the application and agreed Ms. Smith should send a letter to the State DES recommending they approve the application.

Review of Wetlands Forestry Notification – Thomas Perron – 328 Old Bay Road- Map 256 Lot 009

Ms. Smith stated she did not believe this application required any action by the Commission but was just for their information. Commission members reviewed the Wetlands Forestry Notification for Thomas Perron – 328 Old Bay Road- Map 256 Lot 009.

Ridge Runner's Farm – acknowledgement

Chair McHale stated Ms. Smith received an e-mail, that she forwarded to him, from former Commission member Cathy Allyn stating the owners of Ridge Runner's Farm are retiring and she suggested the Commission give them some type of acknowledgement for their good environmental practices. Chair McHale asked Ms. Smith to forward Ms. Allyn's e-mail to the other members.

Review of Minutes

Commission members reviewed the minutes of 30 July 2013.

Mr. Berube made a motion to approve the minutes of 30 July 2013 as printed. Mr. Craycraft seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Review of Mail

Board members reviewed the mail. Chair McHale stated Kari Lygren contacted him about an event Moose Mountain Regional Greenways will be having in affiliation with the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions on 7 November 2013. Chair McHale noted more information will be made available as the event approaches.

2014 Budget

Ms. Smith stated Board of Selectmen Chair Terry Jarvis asked her if the respective Chairs of the Land Use Boards would be presenting their budgets to the Selectmen or would she be presenting the budgets. Chair McHale stated he would rather have Ms. Smith present the budget.

Ms. Smith gave Commission members copies of the 2010, 2011, and 2012 budget, as well as, the 2013 budget with expenditures as of 9 July 2013. Commission members reviewed the information. Commission members asked Ms. Smith to check with the bookkeeper to find out the membership cost for Moose Mountain Regional Greenways, New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions and Strafford River Conservancy and also when the membership dues are due.

Commission members agreed to decrease the 'Postage' line to \$140.00 (a \$140.00 decrease to that line) and increase the 'Meetings/Conferences' line to \$240.00 (a \$140.00 increase to that line). Mr. Craycraft stated it should be relayed to the Selectmen that sometimes members pay for the conferences out of their own pocket but the money should be available for members who want to attend.

At 9:35 pm Mr. Craycraft made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Berube seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Smith
Recording Secretary