

North Hampton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
February 13, 2013
As Approved

Administrative

Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM. Present were Chris Ganotis (Chair), Lee Brooks (Vice Chair), Kathy Grant, Peter Robie and Lisa Wilson, Alternate. Members of the public included Cynthia Jenkins and Chuck Robie.

Consideration of Minutes

After review of the January 15, 2013 minutes, *a motion was made by Lee Brooks, duly seconded by Kathy Grant, to accept the minutes as written with one minor correction.* The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

After review of the January 17, 2013 Public Hearing minutes, *a motion was made by Peter Robie, duly seconded by Lee Brooks, to accept the minutes as written.* The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

After review of the January 17, 2013 Special Meeting minutes, a motion was made by Lee Brooks, duly seconded by Peter Robie, *to accept the minutes as written after an amendment* (regarding town easement or town property not charging fees for entering private property. The Chair said he would get clarification regarding this). The motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

Trail Maintenance Projects

Peter Robie reported that he cleared and re-routed the Robie trail near the entrance of the easement. On February 11th, the Select Board approved the deed amendment for the new access route through the Corbett parcel to the Robie Easement land.

Trail Use Communications: Newsletter, Brochure, Website

Lisa Wilson reported that she should have a draft trail maps brochure completed soon.

New Business

Update: Little River quality testing and DES Grant Proposal

DES has awarded a two-year grant for the Little River Watershed for \$30,000 with an additional Town match of \$23,000 required. The match can be cash or in-kind services. The contract was sent by DES and is being reviewed. Projects will include constructing grassed swails, rain gardens and other containment areas to mitigate storm water run off in the Little River Watershed. The Select Board has approved \$10,000 for continued water quality testing for fiscal 2013-2014. This work can be included toward the DES grant in-kind match, so there is \$13,000 of remaining match which can be met with in-kind services. This summer, septic odor sniffing dogs will be used for identifying septic failure sources and selective MST tests will be performed for identifying animal waste contamination. These are included in the \$10,000 budget.

Little River Dam Removal Project

A DES wetlands permit application is being drafted by the Rockingham County Conservation District for the demolition of the small farm dam on the Little River located on the Dupont conservation parcel. If the permitting becomes too difficult or costly to implement, an alternate plan will be to perform scheduled routine maintenance to remove tree branches, leaves and other debris from the opening in the dam to improve the flow of the river.

Conservation Easement for Gov. Dale Farm

The Select Board approved the Commission's recommendation to commit \$350,000 from the Conservation Capital Reserve Fund for the Gov. Dale Farm easement.

Article 7, seeking \$150,000 in taxation as partial payment for the easement, was passed at the Deliberative Session as written and it will be on the Town Meeting Warrant on March 12. There was discussion on the cost if Article 7 is approved, which would be approximately \$60.00 per household (fifteen cents per thousand) one time, this year only, as compared with the minimum

of \$133.00-\$282.00 increase in taxes per household per year for the next several years, should Article 7 not be passed by Town Meeting.

The Federal Ranchland Protection Program Grant application was submitted in December and it is anticipated that notice of whether the grant will be awarded will be made by the government sometime this spring.

A Public Outreach brochure is being drafted to promote Town voter approval of Article 7. Lisa Wilson described the outreach mailer to be sent to every resident in town. It will include a four-page description and photos. After some discussion, a ***motion was made by Lisa Wilson, duly seconded by Peter Robie, to expend the sum of up to \$3,500.00 from for the Capital Reserve #8 Fund for the printing and mailing of 2,700 mailers (800 to P.O. Boxes) if the mailers cannot otherwise be funded by the South East Land Trust.*** The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

The Chair then asked if there were any public comments from the floor. Chuck Robie of North Road spoke in favor of Article 7. He then clarified that the \$350,000 from the Capital Reserve Fund, which would be used to partially pay for the Gov Dale land easement, would not impact the Town's general tax rate. The Chair explained the \$350,000 is only from taxpayer land owners who withdrew land assessed as Current Use and paid current use taxes. These current use penalty taxes were accumulated over many years in the conservation fund, in accordance with the Town Meeting vote passed in 1987. It was also mentioned that grant funds from the Federal Government may be available now, but possibly may not be in the future.

Cynthia Jenkins, Agriculture Commission Chair, also spoke in support of Article 7. She is very familiar with the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program, having placed an easement on her land with a FRPP Grant in 2007. She further mentioned that easements are monitored on a yearly basis to ensure land resource preservation.

There being no further comments nor other business to discuss, ***a motion was made by Lee Brooks, duly seconded by Peter Robie, to adjourn the meeting.*** The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Moore
Recording Secretary