

Conservation Commission Minutes - March 10, 2014

Chairman Sam Demeritt opened the meeting at 7:24. Other members in attendance were Celia Abrams, Deb Kimball, Cheryl Smith and Raelene Shippee-Rice, Alternate, sitting in for Susan Mooney.

Guests: Ray and Patty Bateman

Bateman property: The Batemans came to discuss the possibility of putting a conservation easement (CE) on their 25.88 acre property at 196 Stage Road, Map 37/Lot12. We began an informal discussion with them prior to a quorum being reached. The lot is currently open pasture used for beef cattle. It has 1125' of frontage on Stage Road; the W boundary is the North River. A bridge crosses the river with a RoW for the Fernalds to access the eastern section of Mulligan Forest. This access could perhaps also be used to reach the portion of the North River Reserve on the W side of the North River. The Batemans would be open to allowing some public access, to be determined. Permission from the Fernalds would also be needed. The Batemans' goal is to continue living on the property as long as they are able and would draw on their compensation for the easement to pay their property taxes in future years. They would like the property to remain undeveloped. They gave their permission to publically discuss their project. It may qualify for the Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program (FRPP) or equivalent. It appears the property may have locally important agricultural soils. Demeritt will discuss with Bear-Paw whether they may be willing to partner on this project. The Batemans left at 7:35pm.

Emails from Selectboard Members – It was brought to our attention that two members of the Board of Selectmen had sent emails regarding the Planning Board (PB) candidates for the upcoming election, urging voters to vote for candidates who would reject land use regulations that would limit property rights by requiring conservation subdivisions. Ms. Bonser's email specifically asserted that the Conservation Committee [sic] was trying to gain control of the PB. We agreed we needed to make a public rebuttal to this assertion. By state RSA, there can only be one member of the PB who is also a member of the CC. The proposed warrant article was brought forward by a majority of the PB without involvement of the CC.

Building and wi-fi access - Demeritt has been given a key to the building and the password to the town wi-fi, as requested after the last meeting.

Conservation Easements (CE) – We have new information from SPNHF regarding the possible CE for property P1. We have previously committed up to \$150,000 for this project from the Conservation Fund (CF). We reviewed recent and pending LUCT transfers to the CF and found that this money, along with delaying the expenditure of the \$12,500 for the Kennard CE, would allow us to nearly meet the projected easement cost for P1. Demeritt will get an updated

LUCT accounting from the business office and let SPNHF know we would like to re-enter discussions with the landowner about proceeding with the project.

It was moved by Smith and seconded by Kimball to delay the Kennard CE and allocate the \$12,500 toward the P1 project. All 5 votes were in favor. It was moved by Smith and seconded by Abrams to apply the current uncommitted balance of the CF (approximately \$72,800) to project P1. All 5 votes were in favor.

Correspondence –

DES Shoreland Impact Permits:

2014-00200, 2/10/14, Lookout Point Lane, Map71/Lot 46, 8280 sq ft of impact to construct a new house, well and septic, for Roberta and William Ciani, has been approved. This property is off Mountain Rd and Lakeview.

2014-00348, 2/20/14, 125 Highland Ave, Map67/Lot 23, 8430 sqft of impact to construct a new dwelling and septic, for Steven Rheume, has been approved.

Bear-Paw Regional Greenways – The next newsletter is planned for early April. The Conservation Roundtable will be postponed to the fall. Upcoming events: Off-trail outdoor skills workshop 4/2 in Deerfield; 5/10 birdwalk on the Isinglass; 6/14 biothon at the Strafford School easement site; 6/28 paddle at Wild Goose Pond; 9/13 Casting on the Suncook.

Lamprey River Watershed Association – A regatta is planned soon.

Other Business – CC terms for Abrams and Smith expire in April. It was moved by Kimball, seconded by Shippee-Rice to request their reappointment; all 5 votes in favor. Marge has informed Demeritt that Rob Graham of Lakeview Drive has expressed an interest in joining the CC. Smith reported that Lee Lederer may also be interested. Demeritt will follow up. There is no limit on the number of alternates we can have. We have not had an update from Noel Carlson on whether he expects to be able to return to the CC. We will hold his seat open in the meantime.

A motion to adjourn was made by Abrams and seconded by Kimball. All 5 votes were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10.

Respectfully submitted,

Celia Abrams, Temporary Secretary

These minutes were accepted as amended at the meeting held on May 12, 2014.