

MINUTES

Tamworth Conservation Commission October 8, 2007

Minutes approved at Commission meeting of November 12, 2007.

Present: Bill Batchelder, Ned Beecher, Bryan Berlind, John Mersfelder (alternate), Charlie Townsend, Donna Veilleux

1. Call to Order at 7:00 p.m.

John Mersfelder was appointed as voting member in place of Scott Aspinall.

2. Approval of Minutes

- Minutes of September 10, 2007 were approved, with one change: on the second page: change to “to recommend to the Selectmen that Susan start at \$15 per hour...” Donna moved, Charlie seconded, all approved the minutes as amended (one abstention).
- September 19, 2007 (Special Meeting). The following changes to the minutes were discussed:
 - Donna clarified, and asked that the minutes reflect, that she has not formally recused herself from the current CMI application (December 2006), but she had recused herself from deliberations on the prior CMI application.
 - Correct spelling: “preferred”
 - 3rd page - “racetrack” used interchangeably with “motorsports park”
 - It was discussed whether the motion on the CMI application was with regards to the lack of information on the use of the uplands, as noted in the draft minutes, or whether the minutes should state that the lack of information was with regard to the whole proposed project on the whole property. It was agreed that checking with Jim Alt, who made the motion, would be helpful for clarification.
 - Ned moved to table discussion of the minutes, Charlie seconded, and all approved tabling this discussion.

3. Land Protection

Conservation Land Review Committee Chris Conrod, Committee Chair, provided a summary of the work of CLRC, including regarding value analysis of lands / easements proposed for conservation. He passed out an updated report on “Conservation Value Assessment,” a tool they developed and have applied, as an example, to the Cersosimo property (see below). Chris stressed that the scoring system gives equal score (5) to each conservation value, such as agricultural soil, aquifer, surface water, wetlands, etc. Also – those lands that are more easily developed (good soils for septic, accessible, etc.) have a lower score for conservation, because some developable lands are needed for population growth.

With regards to the Cersosimo property, Chris noted that it is a good property to protect, because of the potential for this property to provide one portion of a corridor crossing Route 25 (on the south side of 25, there are wetlands and if that property, which is unlikely useful for development, is protected also, the total would be ideal for protecting a corridor). John supported Chris's statement. He stressed also that the map of natural resources is just that – not necessarily just for use for land protection.

Chris noted that he will have to take time off from the Committee in December for at least three months (until March). He will step down as Chair, feeling it is too much to do along with doing much of the technical work of the Committee. He may be able to rejoin the Committee in the spring, but would prefer to do so not as Chair. His leadership and hard work on the Committee was noted and appreciated by all.

Steve & Marie McConarty proposed conservation easement. Bryan reviewed the letter received from the McConartys offering to grant a conservation easement on the northern part of their property, bordering on the Mill Brook. There was discussion regarding whether or not this was a good time to discuss this offer, given that the wetlands matter on the proposed driveway is still before DES. However, it was noted that the Commission had made it explicit that pursuit of an easement was not connected at all to the wetlands permit issue. Discussion continued, and John noted that the proposed 14-acre easement has mostly wetlands that are not developable anyway and may not be worth the cost and effort of an easement. Mr. McConarty pointed out that the easement includes an estimated 6 acres of upland and 8 acres of wetlands, according to Irene Garvey. The question is whether the proposed conservation easement would add significant protections. Of interest to the Town and the Commission would also be a buffer easement along the Bearcamp River. John asked Mr. McConarty about the possibility of a 300-foot easement along the Bearcamp. Steve said he would consider this, perhaps in addition to the original offer at the north side of the property.

The original 14-acre offer seems to have a fairly high value, in terms of the new scoring system developed by CLRC (see above). It was agreed to have the McConartys submit a sketch map of the wetland upland boundaries in the proposed easement area to the Commission, who will check with the Selectmen as to the likelihood of acceptance by the Town. Mr. McConarty and the Commission agreed that they would work together to try to finalize such an easement by December 31st, if possible and if the Selectmen are supportive.

Cersosimo land protection option Bryan talked with the landowner, who offered that they want to sell the land outright, but would offer a lease-purchase option of payments over many years. The town assessed value is \$152,500. The property is in current use, paying minimal taxes. The current landowner is asking \$300,000 for the property. They hope for a decision by the end of November, 2007, as to whether or not the Commission/Town is interested. It was agreed to tell the landowner that the Town would likely only spend the assessed value or a few percentage points above that (land trusts have a limit of 10% above assessed value). Bryan will look into what the landowner purchased the land for. It was agreed that the Commission is likely willing to help

facilitate the purchase by a third party or through some sort of grant. It was agreed that we see if the landowner is willing to grant us time to work on this. Bryan will draft a letter to Cersosimo and share it with the Commission by email. Chris noted that Bearcamp Trackers will visit the Cersosimo property on Oct 28 at 8:45 am (across the steel bridge in S. Tamworth, then right).

Stewardship funding for conservation easements

John Mersfelder provided the results of his research into how different towns manage the monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements in terms of funding. Should monitoring and defense of easements be done with funds from the Conservation Fund, or from some separate Stewardship Fund? The most important aspect of avoiding problems, of course, is to do a good job monitoring easements regularly and communicating routinely with landowners of lots that have easements on them. Chris and John handed out a description of stewardship funds from the Land Trust Standards and Practices Guide, which would suggest that a Tamworth stewardship fund should have principal in the range of \$20 – 30K, which could be from the Conservation Fund. Stewardship Fund could be added to through private donations or through an increase in the Land Use Change Tax designation that goes to Conservation matters. Willie Farnum suggested that a Trust Fund would likely be the right way to set this up and he will check with the Dept. of Revenue Administration about this. Additional information will be available at the November meeting.

4. Committee / Coordinator Reports

- Joint Meeting of the Town boards This Wednesday – joint meeting with Planning Board and Selectmen regarding improving communications amongst the 3 boards, improving procedures and protocols for applicants (especially for wetlands ordinance applications), review ordinances (who should ordinances be reviewed by), etc. Ned said he cannot attend; Brian expected to.
- Treasury & Budget: Charlie noted that there is \$56,532.21 in the Conservation Fund, according to the last statement.
- Fire Tower Repair: The Berriers have completed work on the Great Hill Firetower roof. The area was well cleaned up after their work. They submitted a bill for the additional work totalling \$1,471. Charlie noted that the steps and floor should be painted next year. Mounted photos are fading and may need attention soon. The total cost of the project was \$3,871: \$1,000 from Town Meeting, \$1,400 from a grant by the Tamworth Foundation, and \$1,471 from the Commission's budget.
- NHACC Dues & Meeting: Ned moved and Donna seconded and all approved that the Commission spend \$305 to register in advance three Commissioners (Donna, John, Bryan – Donna will complete registrations and send a personal check and get reimbursement later) and for annual NHACC dues (\$200). Two checks will be cut.
- TCC Managed Lands & Trails Committee - Trails day October 27th – 7 am – meet at the Town House parking area for taking down trail boxes, fall clean-up, and delineating Waterfowl Haven trails with Chocorua Village Association. Regarding sign for Bearcamp Natural Area – Dave has talked to Sonny Ambrose

about getting a replacement sign done – likely cost would be \$300. This is a 2' x 5' sign. Donna is going to see if we can get the sign routed by Kennett Voc-Ed students instead. John mentioned that there should probably be signs marking two town properties that have no signs now: the Kennett Triangle and the Hobbes lot.

- Easement Monitoring: Claes reported that he is updating the baseline documentations. He notes that it is time to complete the monitoring for this year – ASAP. Donna will monitor the Cave easement. Needs someone to monitor some of the small ones. Margaret Reiser has expressed interest. Trail easements are also being monitored.
- Publications, Publicity, Outreach, Education Committee: Donna is organizing getting Commissioners signed up for the NHACC annual meeting November 3rd. Donna also feels responsible for getting information to the Green Mountain Conservation Group newsletter and the Tamworth Civic News. Ned mentioned Clean Air Cool Planet's conference in Manchester this coming Friday and Saturday. McNalls are having solar hot water heating installation demonstration in Sandwich this weekend.
- Wetlands & Subsurface Committee: Ossipee Valley Snowmobile Club received waivers from the Planning Board for encroachments on wetland buffer areas. McConarty application to DES: some amendments made by the applicant (with assistance by Irene Garvey); public hearing was held. A copy of a forestry minimum impact approval for Reiser property was received.
- Administrative Assistant Susan reported that she has been reviewing handbooks and files and is developing plans to tackle all these. She is monitoring mail, but others should too for now. Claes is working on easement organization and Susan will be involved once he is on top of it. Susan submitted expenses totaling \$67.50 in labor and \$11.57 in materials. Donna moved, Dave seconded, and all approved payment.
- Selectman's Representative Willie encouraged attendance at the meeting of the boards on October 10.
- Town Energy Committee Donna mentioned three people she has lined up for the Energy Committee: Tom Cleveland's nephew, Donna Veilleux, and Cathy Mersfelder.
- Planning Board Representative David Cluff was not present.

5. New Business

- Willie inquired as to whether there is a copy of the deed of ownership of the Fire Tower. John will try to dig this up. John noted that there is need to update the agreement with the state regarding the trails in Hemenway.

6. Adjournment

Ned moved, Dave seconded, all agreed at 11:12 pm.

Draft minutes respectfully submitted by Ned Beecher, October 13, 2007. Approved November 12, 2007.