

Tamworth Conservation Commission

Draft Minutes – May 14, 2018

Draft minutes to be reviewed and approved at a subsequent meeting

Call to Order – Nelson O'Bryan called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. Commissioners present were Nelson O'Bryan, Stephanie Doyle, Chele Miller and William Batchelder. Commissioners absent: John Watkins and Charlie Townsend. Alternates present: Lucy Gatchell, Eric Dube, Kit Morgan and Dexter Harding. Nelson assigned Lucy, Eric and Dexter to fill the three empty seats.

Also present: Steve Gray, Selectman; Lori Gerard; Lynn Kearney; and John Mersfelder.

Public Hearing for Proposed Purchase of Community School Land

Nelson opened the public hearing and explained the project and the reason for proposing to purchase the 2.5 acres instead of accepting an easement. He passed out a fact sheet describing the project and including a location map.

Lori Gerard spoke in opposition to the project. Her concerns were based on the large amount of conservation land already in Tamworth, the difficulty of finding affordable land for building new houses, the parcel in question has excellent development potential, the project would remove the property from the tax base, and cost of purchase and associated fees should be saved for projects with higher conservation value. She asked what unique or special conservation values were found on the parcel.

The Administrative Assistant reported that the main conservation values discussed in the Conservation Value Assessment of June 27, 2017 were that the property overlaid a stratified drift aquifer, abutted conservation land on two of the three sides, provided an additional buffer to town-owned conservation land, and was within the TCC Whites to Ossipees Wildlife Connectivity Initiative corridor. He also mentioned the importance of undeveloped road frontage being important for wildlife movement.

John Mersfelder discussed the property tax implications and noted that the property is currently owned by a non-profit so tax revenue is very little. He noted previous encroachments on conservation land in that neighborhood and suggested that further development would increase chances of encroachment.

Lori Gerard restated her objections and emphasized that the Conservation Fund could be better spent on projects of greater conservation value.

There being no further discussion, Eric moved to close the public hearing. Stephanie seconded, motion carried. Chele moved to proceed with the project of purchasing the 2.5 acre Community School property. Dexter seconded, no discussion. Vote: yes 6 to 1, with Eric voting no. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes for 04/09/2018 – Batch moved to accept the minutes as written. Chele seconded, motion carried, Eric abstained.

Administrative

Received letter from the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests reporting that they completed a 2017 monitoring inspection of the Reich Brothers easement on Durrell Road. TCC holds an executory interest on this easement.

Received copy of the Spring 2018 Newsletter from Green Mountain Conservation Group.

Nelson reported that Rich Gerard submitted a notice of resignation on April 14th. Nelson will depend on alternates filling the open seat for now and in March 2019 the commission can recommend a nominee to complete Rich's term. The commission thanks Rich for his eight years of service and his contributions to numerous projects, including trail work, easement monitoring and being the prime mover of the summer camp scholarship program.

Stephanie had to leave the meeting. Nelson appointed Kit Morgan to fill the empty seat.

Treasurer's Report/Finance – John was not available to report. Nelson noted that the only expenses so far have been for the payroll.

Planning Board – Eric reported approval of a Scenic Road application for the Highway Department to cut trees along Fowler's Mill Road to facilitate plowing and ditching, and approval of a subdivision at 274 Tamworth Road that separates the commercial garage from the house. There are two subdivision applications pending, one on Old Mail Road and one on Chinook Trail. They will be reviewed at the May 23rd meeting.

Selectmen – Steve Gray reported that the Selectmen are working on how to deal with the noise monitoring issue. He asked about the status of Green Mountain Conservation Group water testing. Chele informed him that GMCG will be hiring a new water quality coordinator to replace Corey Lane. The program will likely continue as is. Nelson said the TCC submits its donation later in the year, after receiving the annual report of the water quality testing. Nelson also reported that he had emailed Peter Smart, asking if the commission could be of any help with the park at the Chocorua dam. He has yet to receive a reply.

Land Conservation

Bearcamp Valley Farm – Nelson reported that a request was received from someone doing an appraisal on the farm and wanted information on the conservation easement. Ned Beecher sent a map and summary to the appraiser.

Public Education and Outreach

Vernal Pool Walk – Nelson reported that the walk on April 21 was well attended and a general success.

Program Planning – Lucy reported that the PE&O subcommittee has a mushroom walk planned for June 27. They will get the specifics out soon. They are still working on a date for a wildflower walk and for setting up a Facebook account. Dexter is looking into phenology test plots at Tim Mountain Conservation Center and inquiring with Brett School teachers about other possibilities.

Summer Camp Scholarships – One attendee for Barry Camp and two attendees for Tin Mountain summer programs have been all set up and finalized. Eric moved to authorize a total payment of \$675.00 to cover the summer camp scholarships. Batch and Lucy tied for second. Motion carried.

Easement Monitoring – Dexter volunteered to take over the task of monitoring the Bearcamp Valley Farm easement. Rich Gerard has offered to accompany him during his first inspection. Lucy will be taking over the monitoring duties for Beaver Brook Lot.

Wetlands/Shoreline –

Received copies of two expedited DES wetlands applications for trout stream improvement to the north and west of Chocorua Lake. Project to be done by Dick Fortin, who has previously done three of these projects in Tamworth and who has previously met with TCC to explain the purpose and methodology. Nelson reported that a letter of response has already been sent to DES.

Received copy of DES wetland application for three after-the-fact impacts to streams and 1025 sq. ft. of forested wetland on Tax Map 410/Lots 87 & 88. Batch will contact DES and ask if a TCC representative can accompany the DES inspector during the next site visit..

Managed Lands and Trails – Nelson got a good response for trail work volunteers. An assignment list has been distributed and some of the work has already been completed. Lucy asked if she could participate. Nelson told her to pick a trail and he would send her the assignment list so she could coordinate with co-workers.

Other Business – Kit reported on a recent workshop hosted by Green Mountain Conservation Group concerning collaboration between towns and between towns and organizations and citizens. The next meeting will be May 31st.

Adjourn – There being no other business brought before the Commission, Batch moved, Eric seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:35m.

Submitted by Chris Conrod, TCC Administrative Assistant.