

MINUTES

Conservation Lands Review Committee of the Tamworth Conservation Commission October 26, 2012

Draft minutes to be reviewed and approved at a subsequent meeting.

Present: Bob Seston, Chele Miller, Ned Beecher (first half of meeting only), Katy Thompson, John Mersfelder, David White, and Susan Bryant-Kimball

Meeting began at 9:10 am.

Discussion began about obtaining conservation easements on the final two parcels of land owned by Bearcamp Valley Farm. These are map/lots 420/7 and 420/9, south of Route 25, and behind the houses, barns, and sheds of the farm. These two parallel and contiguous lots extend from the road across the fields and wetlands to the foot of the slope of the Ossipee Mountains and up the slope in forest that has been selectively cut (mostly with horse logging) for the decades.

Agreed: a survey will be needed, especially of the boundary between these properties and the property owned by the Kimballs just to the west. A boundary line agreement may be needed for that line. Susan noted that the position of the line is not clear; she has done extensive deed research going back all the way in history. Ned noted that we want to work together with them, as neighbors, to a satisfactory conclusion.

There was discussion about whether or not any of the farm buildings should be included in the easement area, with stipulations about how they can be used or changed. This could encourage the use of the property as a farm, rather than allowing for any kind of commercial or other development on the roadside. However, most felt that this would overly restrict use of the property, and it would be better for future owners to be able to do what they want with that frontage area. The idea could be, however, to limit the carved-out area to just the land around the current buildings, so that some of the road frontage, at least on the western of the 2 lots, would be in conservation easement and could not be built on.

There was discussion of getting expert input of agricultural easements, perhaps from Annette Loraine in VT.

Review of the goals of this ongoing, multi-year conservation effort: 1) ensuring wildlife connectivity potential by protecting open space adjacent to Route 25 (the bottleneck for connectivity between the Whites and the Ossipees) and 2) protection of agricultural land & activity.

Funding for purchasing conservation easements: Where from? Who from? It depends on the amount of money that has to be raised. What is the value of this land?

David noted that the infrastructure of the Farm is on this land, even if these 2 particular lots are not as good farmland (wet) as the lands to the north of Route 25. Chele noted that the value is in the wildlife connectivity; although there is more value in that regard on the Kimball land to the west. Ned had noted earlier in the meeting that that land is being managed in a way that is protective of wildlife, and that it is not the focus of current discussion; plus, future land use and forestation may make Floyd land more valuable for wildlife. There was discussion of having the farm be used as a farm, or a mixed use,

perhaps a younger farmer will want to get started here; shouldn't think of just a traditional family farm use. Question: is there are building lot on the E or W field on these lots? Lessens focus on present location of infrastructure perhaps.

What is the value? Is there a chance of larger organizations getting involved? Katy will contact Tom Curren at Pew. Ned contacted Lakes Region Charitable, and they provide grants for transaction costs up to \$20,000; deadline is March; award would be in June. This could cover survey, transaction costs. Application is online. There is also a \$5,000 or less option – a 2-page application that can be done any time and takes only a few weeks to process. We have a compelling story: all of the local work we've done on this project; this is the final sprint; a charitable organization should be excited to jump in with a challenge grant to get finish the conservation of this important conservation property.

Ned will talk further details with Bob Floyd.

Meeting adjourned about 10:30.
