

Tamworth Conservation Commission

Minutes

September 13, 2010

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

Call To Order

- Meeting called to order at 7:08 pm by Chair Ned Beecher.
- Members present were Bill Batchelder, Ned Beecher, Charlie Townsend, Chele Miller, Kathy Bunker, and Margaret Rieser.
- Others present included Skip Nason (Planning Board Representative), Bob Seston (Capital Improvement Committee Representative), John Roberts (Select Board Representative).

Approval of Minutes

- Batch moved to accept; Margaret seconded to accept the draft minutes. Motion passed 3-0 with Charlie, Kathy, and Chele abstaining.

Tabled: Vernal Pool Discussion will take place at next meeting: Monday, October 11.

Administrative

Budget Update

- TCC budget for 2011 is due 10/1, but we will develop it at our next meeting on 10/11.
- Charlie will develop a draft budget and get it to Commissioners in advance of that meeting.

Betty Steele History Booklet Reprinting

- Printing is complete. Booklets are for sale in library and Other Store.

Capital Improvement Program

- Town is looking to do a more staggered approach to managing Capital Improvement funds (certain amount spent each year, rather than accumulating large amounts indefinitely.)
- Commission is looking to continue to hold the LUCT (up to the \$5000 cap) but not ask for any other amount to be laid aside. Motion to this effect was made by Charlie and seconded by Kathy. Motion passed unanimously.
- Should the commission ask to extend the LUCT cap to \$10,000? Research should be done regarding what "best practices" are for this. Ned will provide information on what other towns do, in advance our next meeting and the budget discussion then.

Administrative Assistant Search

- Two candidates responded to the ad for a new administrative assistant: Cimbria Badenhause and Chris Conrod. Cimbria has lived in Tamworth for 3 years and is eager to get to know more about the Commission. Chris was formerly on the commission and is looking to participate again.

Public Hearing and Vote on Gilman Forest Land

History

- The project started 2 years ago, when the Forest Society asked the town to be involved in the preservation of this land, something the heirs of Robert Freeto wished to see happen. The Forest Society led the negotiations and technical aspects of the project, whereas the TCC and local volunteers conducted the fundraising and local outreach.
- The necessary funds had been raised by TCC and SPNHF by the May 1, 2010 deadline (\$140,000); SPNHF contributed a significant portion.

Current Status

- Closing set for 9/30.
- SPNHF will hold deed; Town will hold easement, allowing public access (pedestrians, trails, hunting, etc.)

- SPNHF does not typically allow horse traffic. The Town did not find that acceptable. For now, there will be “memorandum of understanding” (MOU) allowing this use. There will be the existing trail as well as an extension marked on a referenced map in the MOU, which will be finalized and signed soon after closing.

Public Input

- Someone asked about applying for funds for trail maintenance under the EQIP program of the NRCS. Ned responded that this could be a good funding source, that it is likely the Forest Society would be willing, as the landowner, to help apply for it, if it was deemed necessary.
- Can hunting with bear dogs be brought up as a use to be disallowed? Ned will check with the Forest Society about this matter and see what they think about it and whether the current language of the easement will allow posting against this particular use.
- To whom should a group go in order to perform any kind of trail maintenance for horse riding or skiing maintenance? Ned responded that the intent is that nothing will change regarding this.... That the Mill Brook Trails Association and others interested can continue to perform some maintenance as needed. For larger maintenance efforts or events, it will make sense to alert the Commission and/or involve it. The Easement places the responsibility for trail maintenance on the Town (Commission), but we will want neighborhood/trail user assistance to continue.
- Public hearing concluded at 8:07PM.

Vote on Expenditure of Funds

- Exact amount for check is not known for closing. It will not exceed \$90,000.
- Charlie moved and Margaret seconded to spend an amount not to exceed \$91,000. All funds (except for ~8,800 put in last year by the TCC to cover expenses) were brought into this special Gilman Forest line item in the Conservation Fund from fundraising from private donors, not tax payer dollars. Motion passed unanimously.
- Thanks to Nelson O’Bryan, Chele Miller, David Little, Kate Thompson, John Mersfelder, and Ned Beecher for their work on this project. Nearly 150 individual contributors gave funds to this project.
- The Commission is grateful to the current landowners, the heirs of Robert Freeto, for their willingness to sell this piece of conservation land at a discounted rate and to work with the various groups over many months to make this transaction happen. This conservation success could not have happened without their input, patience, and support.

Committee/Coordinator Reports

Planning Board Representative

- John reports that Chocorua Valley Lumber is moving forward in a positive way.

Planning Board Representative

- Skip said that the excavation ordinance is moving forward. There has been a lot of input at the public hearings regarding the new ordinance. Chocorua Valley Lumber came to the board to ask if they could sell the aggregate that they had excavated illegally. The Board did not approve of that.

Energy Commission Representative

- Commission meets 3rd Monday of the month. Hoping for someone on the Commission to attend one of their next meetings. Charlie will try to get to their meeting next Monday, the 20th.
- A public energy audit will be conducted in November at the Town Office, in cooperation with the energy commission.

Easement Monitoring

- Easements that were not monitored in 2009 are the priority for 2010.
- Most easements will continue to be monitored by the same people as previously.
- Alt easements need re-numbering to match SPNHF. A date needs to be scheduled to review these easements and develop a plan for monitoring them more efficiently.

Household Hazardous Waste Day

- 2010 Report is available at http://www.lakessrpc.org/services_hhw.asp

Managed Lands and Trails

- Nothing new from Nelson.
- John Roberts will see to mowing Waterfowl Haven.
- Nelson and Ned will see about mowing for Bearcamp Field.
- Page Hill – Outing Club picnic revealed that road is eroding. Work day scheduled to add water bars, etc. on 10/30. November 6 is the rain date. TOC asked if TCC is interested in helping put a gate in to prevent problems with road misuse. John Roberts reported that he believes a lot of traffic occurs there in the Fall for hunting. TOC asking permission from TCC to perform maintenance. Permission was granted. Man-power needs will be assessed at next TOC meeting.
- Bearcamp Trackers did review of Transfer Station property: lots of moose and bear activity. They will go back when there is snow on the ground. Lots of hemlock, black birch, and ash trees found. Bearcamp Trackers will be compiling a report to be reviewed at the next TCC meeting; that report will help the TCC make recommendations to the Selectmen on good potential uses for the property.

Water Quality

- Groundwater protection ordinance – Ned and Kathy worked with David Little and LRPC on drafting and revising this proposed ordinance.
- Planning Board has the draft and a FAQ about it; Ned, etc. it will formally present it to the Planning Board on 9/22.
- The GPO prevents specific uses that are known to contaminate ground water. Otherwise, it requires best management practices when commercial activities involve regulated substances stored in containers of 5 gallons or more. It applies only to those parts of town underlain by wellhead protection areas and stratified drift aquifer.

Wetlands Matters

Ned delegated responsibility for review of the following to the Wetlands and Subsurface Committee, and gave the pertinent documents to Batch.

- Chocorua Lake Bridge – no update
- McConarty: report from Abenaki services to DES. Is a site check needed to ensure remediation is adequate?
- AT&T cell application has not yet been referred to TCC, but the Planning Board will do so soon. Site walk will be warranted when it is referred.
- Kate Thompson waiver application for construction in buffer area near wetlands.

Land Acquisition & Easements

- Ad-hoc committee made up of Chele Miller, Ned Beecher, John Mersfelder, Nelson O'Bryan, David Little, and Kate Thompson,
- A letter was presented to TCC regarding sale of a parcel of land to the south of the Gilman lot. Chele will follow up with the realtor to find out details on this. The landowner states that the sale will include conservation restrictions on the land. This may be an opportunity for a conservation easement.

Administrative Assistant Hiring Decision

- At 9:52, Kathy moved to enter into non-public session for the process of making a hiring selection, discussing personell matters. Margaret seconded. Motion passed unanimously by roll-call vote.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION minutes:

- Commissioners noted the excellence of both candidates.

- After some discussion regarding his extensive experience with Conservation Commission work and in Tamworth, Margaret made a motion to hire Chris Conrod. Kathy seconded. Vote was unanimous in favor.
- It was noted that Cimbria is an excellent resource as well, and her involvement in Commission matters would be welcome any time (e.g. she could be an alternate and, when space opens up, a member on the Commission, as her skills would be very helpful)
- Charlie made a motion regarding the hourly wage to pay Chris. Margaret seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- Batch moved to leave non-public session. Chele seconded. Motion passed.

It was agreed unanimously not to seal the minutes of the non-public session, as long as the interested parties (the two candidates) were notified of the decision prior to the public release of these minutes. Ned will notify both of them on Tuesday.

Adjournment

Kathy moved, and Margaret seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 10:17 pm. The motion passed with no objection.

Draft minutes respectfully submitted by Kathy Bunker and Ned Beecher, September 14, 2010.