

MINUTES

Tamworth Conservation Commission
Ad-hoc Committee on Land Preservation
March 3, 2011
Tamworth Town Offices

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

Committee Members Present: Ned Beecher, David Little, John Mersfelder, Chele Miller, Nelson O'Bryan, Katy Thompson

Others Present: Susan Bryant Kimball, David White

Meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm.

1. Agenda: Ned reviewed the primary purpose of this meeting: to see how things stand with respect to the potential purchase and conservation of the property (map/lot 420/13) owned by Van Hertel and to vote on final recommendations to the full Conservation Commission. Other topics: roles of individuals in the future of this project, and acceptance of minutes of prior meetings.

2. The Opportunity: Ned reviewed the latest discussions with Van Hertel. It seems we are at the last offer: purchase of the property for the appraised value (\$95,000), minus interest that would accrue at 3% from a \$15,000 loan for six months. \$80,000 due at closing in late April, with the \$15,000 loan provided for six months. Purchase and sale to be executed by mid-March.

Pledged donations so far total \$45,000.

Discussion followed regarding potential details of the project, including possible terms of the conservation easement proposed, who might be the landowner (Lakes Region Conservation Trust is willing now), and about the shared goal of trying to have this land remain in agricultural use; i.e. the easement would allow that, with appurtenant structures, and perhaps could be transferred to a farmer in the next several years, if that worked for LRCT and the Commission.

3. Funding by TCC: Last meeting, the idea of TCC contributing a large portion of the Conservation Fund as a sort of bridge loan to get through the closing coming right up was rejected. Ned withdrew this suggestion and suggested, instead, that the TCC should commit some smaller amount to the project. He argued that if this project did not seem a worthy one for a TCC contribution, then it's hard to know what would qualify: there is time pressure, little time for private fundraising, the project involves a challenging negotiation, and it meets both of the TCC's declared conservation objectives: protecting along rivers and in the wildlife connectivity area between the Whites and Ossipees. There was also discussion about balancing public access with agricultural use – an important consideration as the easement is drafted.

Nelson suggested a \$10,000 contribution from the Conservation Fund. Chele clarified that the money should be for a specific interest, such as for purchase of the conservation easement and suggested she would go with \$20,000.

Vote: Chele moved, Nelson seconded, and all agree to the following: To recommend to the full Commission that it accept or purchase a conservation easement on this property. The easement will

not allow development, will promote wildlife connectivity, and will allow agriculture and forestry and appurtenant structures in accordance with best management practices.

Vote: Nelson moved, David seconded, and all agreed to recommend to the Conservation Commission that the Commission expend \$15,000 for the purchase of the Conservation Easement on this property, as discussed above.

Ned noted that he sees these votes as representing the only formal involvement of this Committee and the Commission in this project going forward. Others agreed. Most individual members of the Committee are, however, committed to continuing to help advance the project through fundraising and other support.

4. Acceptance of Minutes: John moved, Nelson seconded, and all approved the following minutes pertaining to the Gilman Forest, Beaver Brook Lot, and the current conservation project (each member recusing him or herself on votes on any minutes of meetings at which they were not in attendance):

- May 20, 2009
- June 3, 2009 (sealed)
- July 23, 2009
- July 31, 2009
- August 14, 2009
- August 24, 2009
- September 2, 2009
- March 5, 2010
- May 11, 2010
- August 27, 2010
- September 24, 2010
- September 24, 2010 (sealed)
- October 8, 2010
- November 12, 2010
- December 8, 2010
- January 28, 2011
- February 22, 2011

5. Adjournment: Nelson moved, John seconded, and all approved at 3:40 pm

5. Unsealing of Minutes: Chele moved, John seconded, and all approved unsealing any of the above minutes that had been sealed, with the one caveat that Ned will ensure that any names of donors to the projects be deleted from them, for those persons' protection and anonymity.