

**TOWN OF DURHAM**  
**Conservation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, September 13, 2005**

Chairman Brian Ameche at the Durham Public Library called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM.

**Members Present:** Brian Ameche, Ray Bahr, Ralph Chase, Joseph Dattilo, Rick Huntley, Bill LaFlamme, Bob Melvin, Adam Moore, Rick Terrill

**Approval of August Meeting Minutes:** Ralph Chase, seconded by Bill LaFlamme to approve the August 9, 2005 minutes, made a motion. Motion passed with 3 abstentions.

**Amendments to Agenda / Approval of Agenda:** Ralph Chase, seconded by Rick Huntley to approve the agenda as presented, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Payment of Bills:** Ronnie Stannard, \$450 for mowing Curtis Woodland 8/3, Flanagan Associates, \$350 for updated appraisal of Jennifer Smith property, \$119 for additional hunter survey cards and Pam Huntley, \$45 for secretarial services; Ralph Chase, seconded by Bob Melvin to approve payment of the bills, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously

**Public Session:** Tommy Curtis presented his proposed Eagle Scout project of improvements to the Skating Pond at White s Farm. Ralph Chase, seconded by Ray Bahr to approve the request of Eagle Scout candidate Tommy Curtis to build wooden stairs and benches at the White s Farm Skating Pond after providing appropriate proof of insurance, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously. Tommy Curtis will call Brian Ameche to coordinate on the look of the benches.

Dave Monroe from the Skating Pond Committee provided an update to the Commission. Their improvement plans have been approved by the Inland Wetlands Commission. They are requesting placing a gazebo on the site. Commission requested that the Skating Pond Committee submit the design of the proposed building for review.

Rick Terrill remarked on the amount of purple loosestrife at the skating pond and suggested looking into a DEP program for biological control measures. He will follow-up with DEP and get pricing.

**Report on Hunting Program & signing of Hunting Permits for hunters in attendance:** All permits were signed. Rick Terrill asked whether charging a fee for permits would help generate revenue. Adam Moore expressed concern with increased liability issues if fees were collected.

**Site Development Plan Review Filcon Minerals Route 68:** Discussion followed. Ralph Chase, seconded by Rick Terrill to provide no comment, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Review of Plans submitted to the Inland Wetlands Commission for Skating Pond Improvements:** Plans were approved by Inland Wetlands Commission. Discussion followed.

Bob Melvin will follow up with Brian Curtis about details of the lighting to be used and confirmation that the proper approvals are in place for any work done in the State right-of-way.

**Status of Proposed Open Space Acquisitions and Update on the New Phase of Open Space Acquisition Program:** Brian Ameche reported that the preliminary approvals for the purchase of the Smith property for open space have been received from the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen. The proposed purchase is scheduled for a vote at the September 19, 2005 Town Meeting. Adam Moore distributed a fact sheet about the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program and feels that the Scott property is a good candidate. He will assist Mr. Scott with the application.

**Open Space Issues Report Status ERT Reports for Curtis Woodlands and Pent Road, Dead Hill Road & Cream Pot Road access gates, Curtis Woodlands encroachments, Signs, Security, Maintenance, Acquisition, Other:** No report has been received from the ERT review, however it is expected soon. Adam Moore will file the application for an ERT review of the Mt. Pisgah Cream Pot Valley property.

The 2 pipe gates have been delivered to the Town Garage. The Commission needs to identify the location for the gate on the Cream Pot Road side of the property, after getting the assessor's map for the area.

There was discussion about the Curtis Woodlands encroachments. Sue Williams was present. Brian Ameche had requested information about the Conservation Commission's rights as a property owner to the centerline of a ROW. He distributed a memo from Ken Antin dated January 17, 2000, which outlined the relevant legal issues. Brian Ameche suggested the Commission get a survey of the property lines in question, and negotiate with the Williams over access issues and the removal of the fences and gates that have been constructed on the Town side of the property line, which in the field is the centerline of the roadbed. Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Ralph Chase to obtain a survey of the relevant Curtis Woodlands property lines, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

There was clarification about the woodpile on the Town property. After further discussion, it appears that the wood pile belongs to the Town. Currently portions of the horse fences and gates are still on Town property. There are two gates, one on either side of the horse enclosure, which also restrict access to the Town property. Sue Williams remarked that locking the Town gate would restrict her access to her property. She also expressed disappointment at being contacted via certified mail rather than being contacted in person about the concerns on the property. Brian Ameche noted that the Williamses must have known that constructing the fences and gates on Town property was not legal.

**Chair's Report Correspondence, Memorial Plantings, Other:** Jan Muraca advised that the lease with Melynda Naples states annual payment. There was discussion about revising the lease to allow for monthly payments. Jan Muraca is also requesting proof of content insurance from Melynda. George and Irene Roberts letter thanking for the cleanup of the Mt. Pisgah property and urging installation of gates to curb the use of the area by ATVs. Brian received a copy of the budget for the 2006 fiscal year showing \$13,600 for the Conservation Commission. Brian Ameche requested a volunteer to write the annual report for 2004-2005. Ralph Chase

volunteered. A letter was received from Maryann Boord's office regarding the Northern Heights subdivision and expressing the concerns with the project as of August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Household Hazardous Waste day is October 1, 2005 at the Lawrence School in Middletown and volunteers are needed. The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Rockfall Symposium is October 7, 2005.

**Other Business:** It is still unclear as to whether there is any benefit to acquiring the parcel abutting the proposed Northern Heights subdivision (Crooked Hill Road). There is no intrinsic value for that parcel alone. However, if it were contiguous to a larger open space parcel, it may be worth consideration.

The Exchange Club wishes to donate a memorial tree planting in honor of Robert White. Bob Melvin, seconded by Rick Huntley to do a memorial tree planting for Robert White, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Coginchaug River Stream Walk training workshop will be held September 17, 2005 from 9AM - 4PM at the Middlefield Community Center.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Huntley  
Recording Secretary