

TOWN OF DURHAM
Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 13, 2009

Casey Cordes at the Durham Public Library called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Members Present: Brian Ameche, Ralph Chase, Casey Cordes, Joe Dattilo, Bill LaFlamme, Bob Melvin

Call to Order/Roll Call: Members present introduced themselves to the audience in attendance.

Approval of Minutes from September Regular Meeting: Ralph Chase, seconded by Bill LaFlamme to approve the September 8, 2009 minutes as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Amendments to Agenda / Approval of October Agenda: Joe Dattilo, seconded by Ralph Chase to approve the agenda as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Session: John Mitchell from the Durham Fair was present and gave an update on maintenance to be done at White's Farm. There are three areas to fix once the areas dry out enough. He sent the Boy Scouts out a second time to patrol for trash in the field. He hasn't checked yet to see if there is still trash around.

Scott Property Agricultural Easement Update: Casey Cordes appeared before the Board of Finance and received \$12,000 in the reserve account for use to cover the expenses associated with obtaining the agricultural easement. The commission has a zero balance in the reserve account after this amount is expended. Ralph Chase reported on the site walk of the property. There are two very nice fields on the upland part of the property.

White's Farm October Work Days Reminder – October 17th & October 24th: The workdays will start at 8AM. The planned work is to finish up in the nursery area and the drainage ditch cleanup. The pear tree is broken and may have been struck by lightning.

Updates for Deerfield Farm Lease Revision & Site Walk for Drainage Issues: The draft lease is ready for review with Melynda. Casey is meeting with her on Thursday. Four people attended the site walk.

Correspondence Re: Dam Failure: There was brief discussion about the State of Connecticut DEP correspondence provided at the last meeting about the Mill Pond dam failure. The file has been closed for a while but it provides some background information.

White's Farm – November Work Day Scheduling, Community Questionnaire, Drainage Improvements Discussion & Correspondence, Community Input: Casey distributed draft copies of the proposed questionnaire about White's Farm. There were additional suggestions about prefacing the questionnaire with the permitted uses for the property and summarize what has been done in the past. Sue White commented that there were 2 original intents for the use of the property - recreation and to be kept as open space while maintained. Over the years, there have been regulations put into place regarding the use of Town of Durham Open Space properties. John Mitchell commented that the Fairgrounds and adjoining properties are patrolled on a regular basis. A workday for November is scheduled for the 7th.

Open Space Acquisition – Criteria Establishment, Map Analysis & Property Identification: There was discussion of the open space map. A suggestion was made to ask Mid-State to do a percentage of the various categories on the map. It would be nice to get another map that included open space properties in the towns adjoining Durham. The commission needs to develop written criteria for acquisitions. There is a draft set of criteria from 6-7 years ago. Casey will email the draft copy of the criteria for review and revision.

Finalized Code of Ethics: There is a public hearing date of October 19th. An approved Code of Ethics will go into effect January 1, 2010. All commissioner members should become familiar with this code.

CACIWC Annual Conference & Land Use Academy– November 14th: There is money in the budget for a couple of commissioner members to attend.

The Metacomet - Monadnock Trail has been designated as a National Scenic Trail. The Department of Interior is looking for 2 representatives from Durham to serve on the Trail Stewardship Council. The first meeting was this evening in Farmington. There has been one volunteer from the community and Casey feels that someone from Conservation Commission should also serve.

Open forum with Property Stewards – Whites Farm – Jack Stahl; Pent Road (Deerfield Farm) – Melynda Naples; Howd Road – Matt Reed; Pisgah Mountain and Creampot Valley - Christina Costas, George & Irene Roberts, Jim Smigal with BSA Troop 27 and Andy Golschneider with Venture Crew 169; Curtis Woodlands – Rob Williams & Mark Smolley; Portion of Wimler Property with Public Access – Dick Porter; and Sawmill Road – Ray Koba: There was a brief discussion about the hunting summaries Joe Datillo compiled. The second gate has been installed on Cream Pot Road.

Payment of Bills: Ralph Chase, seconded by Bob Melvin to approve the payment of bills as presented: \$15.00 to Pam Huntley for secretarial services, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Jeff Meehl inquired about cutting hay on the David Road property. This is already under lease with Melynda Naples. There may be other areas that he could cut and he is interested in more information.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Huntley
Recording Secretary