

**TOWN OF DURHAM
Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 8, 2009**

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

Members Present: Ralph Chase, Casey Cordes, Bill LaFlamme, Bob Melvin

Call to Order/Roll Call: Lacking a quorum, but will make updates on topics that do not require motions.

Amendments to Agenda/Approval of December Agenda: No quorum to make a motion.

Approval of Minutes from November Regular Meeting: No quorum to make a motion.

Public Session: None.

New Business

Request to Lease Farmland – Andy Bozzuto, Three-B Ranch: Mr. Bozzuto was not in attendance.

Conservation Commission Officers for 2010 – General Discussion: There will be elections at the next meeting. Casey needs to step down as Chair in 2010.

FY 2010 & 2011 Budget Cycle: The budget preparation is underway. The Commission's proposed budget is due January 4, 2010. Members with input to budget items should contact Casey.

Casey suggests that Curtis Woodlands be considered for haying to keep it mowed. In considering the leasing of farmland, Durham residents should be given preference.

Joint Meeting Announcement: The annual joint meeting of Boards & Commissions is Wednesday, January 13, 2010 at 7:00 PM. Bob Melvin will attend to represent the Conservation Commission.

Howd Road Property - Communications: The Commission needs to communicate to the Chella Brothers about the 20 trees that will be planted on the property in the spring. The trees are from the America the Beautiful grant that the Town received. If there is no Tree Warden in the spring, the Commission may need to take the lead to get the trees planted in order to not lose the grant. The Recreation Department is interested in creating a fitness trail on the property. Casey would like to re-evaluate the cost per acre for the lease on that property.

Old Business

Land Acquisition Evaluation Criteria – Discussion of Draft Criteria & Approval: Tabled.

Scott Property Agricultural Easement Update & Proclamation: Farmland Trust would like to know how this property fits into the Commission's evaluation criteria. Five or six of the property features fit the current criteria.

Cream Pot Road Property – New Gate Update: The gate is not locked. Casey talked with Pat Benjamin about the gate location. The gate was installed further forward than it should have been because it was flagged wrong. The current location does restrict local property owner access. There was brief discussion about how to proceed beyond keeping the gate unlocked.

White's Farm Update: Sue White thanked the Commission for allowing the work done so far at White's Farm. The Commission thanks the Friends of Whites Farm, Durham Fair Association and other Town's people that helped on the

workdays. Ralph Chase installed two “No Firearm” signs at Whites Farm. He was unable to place signs near the skating pond because it was too wet. Ralph could not locate one monument.

Continuing Evaluation of Parking Lease Parking Request for Map 68, Lot 8: The wetlands have been flagged at a cost of \$300.00. A site walk is scheduled for the property on January 9, 2010 at 9 AM. The Commission is looking at the lease the United Churches of Durham has with the Town for library parking as a starting point to develop a parking lease should this project move forward.

Deerfield Farm Update and Discussion with Melynda Naples: Melynda Naples was not present. A new lease was signed on December 1, 2009. However, additional comments came back from the First Selectman’s office since the signing. Those comments will have to be incorporated and go back to Melynda.

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: George and Irene Roberts reported fireworks being set off at the top of Mt. Pisgah : Mark Smolley lost his GPS unit on the Curtis Woodlands property. Joe Ruggiero, DEP Conservation Officer, told George & Irene Roberts that he does not have a key to the gates. Keys to the gate locks on Open Space property need to be distributed again. Bill LaFlamme noted that two of the most recently planted trees in the Memorial planting area are leaning.

Payment of Bills: Tabled until next meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Huntley
Recording Secretary