

D-R-A-F-T

DURHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Thursday, May 13 2004

Durham Town Hall – Council Chambers

7:00 PM

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm. Duane Hyde served as Chair.

Members present: Lee Alexander, Rich Hallett, Beryl Harper, Duane Hyde, Bill Skinner, Peter Smith, George Thomas, and Kevin Webb

Excused absences: Jim Hellen and Dwight Baldwin

1. New Business/Presentations

- a. Welcomed two new members: Beryl Harper and George Thomas
- b. Public comments – none
- c. Spruce Woods - Jack Farrell gave an informal presentation of a revised Conceptual Site Plan for “Spruce Woods” development. He is currently going through the early phases of a Conservation Development Process with the Planning Board. Present plan would be 92 units on 124 acres. There are some concerns related to sewage treatment (on site vs. hooking into a town sewer line on Mast Road). Potentially, there could be a dedicated sewer line just for this development. Suggestions were provided on some potential sitting alternatives for the buildings. Mr. Farrell will continue to make refinements and intends to make another presentation at future meetings.

2. Acceptance of minutes of April 8, 2004 – Approved with some minor amendments.

3. Ongoing Business

- a. Wetlands applications - Lee Alexander reported no new applications have been filed. There was some discussion about a wetland crossing on a lot adjacent to the Hockey Rink that received a variance some years ago.
- b. Mill Pond - Bill Skinner reported that some additional shoreline maintenance activities had been performed. Mike Lynch met with UNH regarding their use of the dredged spoils. This should be the last step in the permit application preparation process.
- c. Land Protection Working Group - Duane Hyde reported that Town Council approved and adopted the “Policy for Acquiring Legal Interest on Conservation/Open-Space Land” on 3 May 04. A copy was provided at the meeting. Duane met with Todd Selig regarding the process that is planned for land appraisals and negotiations.
- d. Volunteer Stewards/Trail Program – Currently, there is no task leader for this effort. Chair encouraged some member(s) to take this on. Peter Smith mentioned a draft policy had been prepared on “appropriate use of town-owned lands.”

4. Board and Committee Reports

- a. Town Council - Peter Smith reported that the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite (Zoning Code) was passed on 10 May 2004 and is now in effect. A major change is that more so than a “soils

based” approach, other considerations will be considered (habitats, viewshed, etc.). There will be much more interaction between PB and Town Council. The implementation of the new Zoning Code may include some further amendments/modifications suggested by Town Council.

b. Planning Board - Kevin Webb reported that Spruce Woods is the only active development process. He also mentioned the approval of the new Zoning Code and the need for DCC to be actively involved. Looking ahead, there may be a need to revise the Town Master Plan.

c. Lamprey and Oyster River Watershed Association - Rich Hallett reported that both groups are worried about the possible USA Springs bottling plant. Apparently, DES now views what were previously considered “fatal flaws” for the previous application now to be minor concerns. Tom Balisteros (UNH) has some concerns about the impact on Lamprey River flow. It may be appropriate for DCC to send a letter to DES about this matter. Peter Smith mentioned that this should also come to the attention of Town Council. Rich Hallett will meet with Todd Selig, look into the time frame, and draft a letter.

5. Other Business

a. Land Protection WG Funding Request - Duane Hyde introduced a “Proposal for a Conservation Easement for Mill Pond Center Property” (copy distributed at meeting). The Rockingham Land Trust (RLT) and the Durham Land Protection WG have partnered together. It is proposed that RLT and the Town of Durham would each fund 50% of the cost of the Conservation Easement \$140K. He requested that \$70K be provided from the Town of Durham Conservation fund or the \$2.5MM bond issue.

Kevin Webb moved that \$70K be allocated from the Current Use Change Tax fund. Lee Alexander seconded. Motion was unanimous.

b. Smithfield-Fellows Lane ZBA Application – It is proposed that “non-native trees” to be removed from a wetlands site. Following a brief discussion, Duane Hyde suggested that a site visit by DCC was appropriate. Saturday, 22 May at 9:00am was proposed.

c. Prime Wetlands Designation Map – still needs a task leader.

d. Current Status of “overlays districts” for Town Master Plan – need to check on status

e. Policy regarding use of Town recreational/conservation land – need to discuss with Park and Rec and potentially, meet with Todd Selig

6. Administrative

a. Assignment of tasks to members was explained to new members

b. Policy regarding absences to meetings was explained

c. Date of next meeting – 10 June 2004

d. Correspondence – nothing of major note

e. Updated Membership List – was circulated; minor revisions needed

Meeting adjourned at 9:40pm