

DURHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes to Meeting - Final

10 February 2005

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm

Members Present: Lee Alexander, Dwight Baldwin (Chair), Cynthia Belowski, Beryl Harper, Jim Hellen, Duane Hyde, Peter Smith, and Kevin Webb.

Excused Absence: Wendy Fogg and George Thomas

Public Attendees: Tom Merrick, Mark Zankel, Jack Farrell, and Dea Brickner Wood

1. New Business/Presentations

a. Mark Zankel (Nature Conservancy) - Follett's Brook Watershed Ecological Inventory
- Mr. Zankel gave a PP presentation (a copy provided to Lee Alexander) on the results of the habitat inventory/assessment. Two copies of the written report were provided. One copy will be kept in Town Hall.

6 Steps to the Inventory

1. landscape analysis
2. landownership
3. compile existing info
4. conduct field inventory
5. compile/analyze field data
6. develop conservation plans

Dea Brickner Wood - (Gt. Bay Protection) explained the Follett's Brook study and funding request of \$5K from DCC for appraisal (to be appropriated if the project is approved).

- Will apply for N.Am Wetland Conservation Act (NACA) grant. They want Durham to be a partner along with Newmarket. This could lead to 2:1 matching for land conservation. Peter Smith mentioned the importance of the Land Protection WG being involved in this effort.

- \$5K expenditure was approved (all in favor), to be taken out of Conservation Fund Current Use penalty tax account.

b. Jack Farrell – Craig Meadows development

Mr. Farrell presented a new concept plan for a senior housing complex off Madbury Road (5 acres). The plan includes the set aside of a large conservation area (12.5 acres). DCC felt that this appears to be an improved concept compared to what had been previously proposed. It also addresses many of the concerns provided in a Memorandum from DCC to the Planning Commission (11 Dec 02). If this project is approved, Duane Hyde suggested that the Strafford Rivers Conservancy could hold the conservation easement.

c. Dan Beller-McKenna – Beech Hill Road improvement (not discussed)

2. Acceptance of minutes of January 13, 2005

- postponed until next meeting

3. Ongoing Business

- a. Wetlands applications – (not discussed)
- b. Mill Pond – (not discussed)
- c. Land Protection Working Group – Duane Hyde
 - 1) Merrick Property Conservation Easement

Duane briefly reviewed the content of his Memo to DCC (8 Feb 05). For the 21.5 acre parcel, Tom Merrick (owner) is willing to grant a conservation easement for \$75,000. Additional acquisition funds needed would be approximately \$15,000. Most likely, the Easement would go the Strafford Rivers Conservancy or be held by the town with conservation easement/stewardship contracted to a Land Trust.

Tom Merrick provided a brief history and overview of the property, and conveyed his interest in seeing the property conserved.

\$75,000 (Conservation Easement)

15,000 (acquisition fees)

\$90,000

\$90K approved (all in favor) - to be taken out of Current Use penalty tax

2) Funding request for land appraisal

60 acre tract of land (primary scenic vista). Estimated to be \$5,000.

\$5K was approved (all in favor) – funds to come out of conservation fund

d. Town Land-Use/Trails Subcommittee – Jim Hellen reported that this Group continues to meet.

e. Wetland issues – Cynthia Belowski will meet with Dr. Paul Johnson (UNH) regarding a possible student project to assess prime wetlands issues. Will send a proposal to DCC members for funding.

4. Board and Committee Reports

a. Town Council – (not discussed)

b. Planning Board – (not discussed)

c. Lamprey River Committee and Oyster River Watershed Assoc. – (not discussed)

5. Other Business

a. Durham Shore land and Wetland Overlay Districts

1) Shoreland – Page by page suggestions were recommended and discussed. These were recorded by Kevin Webb. This process will be continued when DCC meets again on 17 Feb.

b. Monitoring land under conservation easement with the DCC – (not discussed)

c. Oyster River dredging proposal – (not discussed)

6. Administrative

a. Correspondence

b. Next meeting

7. Adjournment – Meeting ended at 10:00pm

- A Special Meeting on the Shoreland and Wetland Overlays will be held on Thursday, 17 Feb 05 at the Police Station.