

Durham Conservation Commission

Minutes to Meeting

December 14, 2006

Members present: Dwight Baldwin, Cynthia Belowski, Beryl Harper, Jim Hellen, Duane Hyde, Peter Smith, George Thomas, and Robin Vranicar

Absent: Richard Ozenich

1. New Business/Presentations

Doug MacLennan, owner of the historic Sullivan House (1760), came before the commission to ask for suggestions on how to eradicate the invasive Japanese Knotweed that has taken root between the house and Oyster River. As it is so close to the water, he has been advised not to use herbicides. Duane Hyde suggested that he contact Rachel Stevens at the Great Bay Discovery Center to ask for suggestions. It was also suggested that mowing it down close to the ground, removing as much root material as possible, covering the infested area with water-permeable landscape cloth and then covering the cloth with a thin layer of soil might work. What knotweed that does make it up through the landscape cloth could then be mowed down with a lawn mower. It was noted that Japanese Knotweed is extremely difficult to eradicate and that getting rid of it will entail a long-term, on-going effort.

2. Acceptance of November 9, 2006 minutes

The minutes were accepted with minor revisions.

3. Ongoing Business

a. Wetland Applications – No new applications have been received this month. George Thomas reported that he has set up a filing system in the DCC room at Town Hall for all wetland-permit applications.

b. Mill Pond – The Army Reserves has said that it will get back to Mike Lynch by the end of the year with more details concerning the time schedule for the dredging of Mill Pond.

c. Land Protection Working Group - Duane Hyde reported that funding from NOAA was approved for the purchase of the Beaudette Property and the conservation easement on the Langley farm was received on December 13, 2006. It was also noted was that Mr. Goss, who owns property on SR 155, is asking for rezoning of his property from residential to commercial. This would have serious consequences for the preservation of open space in Durham and the DCC should keep an eye on this matter.

d. Town Land-Use/Trails Subcommittee – The Longmarsh boardwalk is now 90% complete. It is hoped that repair of the rutting of the road into the marsh, necessitated by the need to get material to the work site, will be repaired before the ground freezes this winter. Discussion followed concerning the need to get a kiosk built at the head of the trail with funds remaining from the boardwalk project. Also discussed was the need to mark the property boundary and trails.

e. Oversight of town-owned land and conservation easements - Cynthia Belowski reported that she is in the midst of putting together a document that will provide information concerning the DCC-oversight responsibilities on land owned by the Town. She hopes that this will be completed by the end

of winter. Cynthia also reported that the LRWA would be submitting a grant proposal for funds to survey the condition of the Lamprey River from its headwaters to its mouth. The DCC will be asked to submit a supporting letter.

4. Board and Committee Reports

a. Town Council – Peter Smith reported on the budget deliberations being held by the Durham Town Council (DTC). The DTC has suggested that the Durham Conservation Commission (DCC) contribute \$70,000 from its NHPDIP Account (“Land-Use Change Tax”) to pay the interest on the bonds that were taken out to purchase conservation easements this year. The DCC indicated its willingness to make available to the DCC up to \$70,000 on the recognition of the extraordinary financial situation that has arisen in 2006. Specifically, the DCC notes the purchase of 3 conservation easements in new year instead of their purchase being spread over a period of several years. But the DCC feels strongly that this willingness to pay the interest should be considered a one-year authorization only. In future years, payment of this interest should be factored into the regular Town budget. To draw the NHPDIP account down to nothing to pay the interest on these bonds over an expended period of years would be a major mistake given the importance of these funds for other worthy conservation projects in Town.

b. Update on Jackson’s Landing – The Town was not successful in obtaining funds administered by NHDES Watershed Assistance and Restoration. New funding proposals will be submitted to the DES Coastal Programs granting program and to the NH Division of Parks and Recreation. The former would be for remediation of the erosion and sedimentation problems at the site and the latter for construction of a boardwalk across the marsh and a trail system. Baldwin announced that the first part of our January 2007 meeting would be devoted to a public hearing on the Town’s intent to submit a grant proposal to the NHDES Coastal Program.

c. Carbon Challenge Meeting – Dwight noted that a meeting will be held on January 16th at the Durham Community Church at 7:00 p.m. for anyone interested in helping in an effort to reduce CO2 emissions in Durham. It is hoped that Durham might become a model for other towns in NH to follow.

d. Forestry zoning in Durham – No action was taken on this issue. Peter Smith was going to ask Jim Campbell for a synopsis of what regulations have been in the past, why changes were felt necessary and what is the rationale behind changes proposed by the Planning Board.

e. Julian Smith request information about the location of a glacial erratic supposed to be somewhere on Beech Hill. No information was forthcoming.

6. Administrative

a. Next meeting to be on January 11, 2007

7. Adjournment

Submitted by: Robin Vranicar, Dwight Baldwin