

Approved May 8, 2008

DURHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes of Thursday April 10, 2008
Durham Town Office – Council Chambers
7:00 PM

Regular Members Present: Duane Hyde, Cathy Leach, George Thomas, Beryl Harper, Stephen Roberts

Alternate Members Present: Dwight Baldwin, Peter Smith

Regular Members Excused: Cynthia Belowski

Alternate Members Excused: Robin Vranicar

Public Attendees: Robin Mower, Beth Olshansky, Malcolm McNeill, Richard MacLean, Dave Garvey, John Farrell

1) Call the meeting to order and acknowledge absentees and those with voting authority.

Vice Chair Duane Hyde called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. Dwight Baldwin will vote in place of Cynthia Belowski this evening.

Duane Hyde suggested amending the agenda to add the description of an ecological inventory by Richard MacLean as item 2 b).

Beryl Harper moved to accept the agenda as amended. This was seconded by George Thomas and approved unanimously.

2) New Business/Presentation

a) John Farrell – preliminary concept for Conservation Subdivision on the Tecce property -- Mr. Farrell noted that he is beginning the planning and approval process for a conservation subdivision to be used as a multi family housing development on the Tecce parcel. He explained that a wetlands identification study has been done on the property and that of the usable land left on the parcel, 50% of that land must be set aside as open space. Mr. Farrell reported to the Commission what he felt would be desirable land on the property to be left untouched (secondary conservation area). He asked for the Commission's review of his suggested areas, which consisted of extending the 125 ft setback from the river to a 250 ft setback from the river and an additional setback from the wetlands located in the center of the property. Mr. Farrell explained to the Commission members his proposal to swap a portion of land on this parcel with a portion of land on the adjacent parcel of Sprucewoods and to build housing on a portion of the Sprucewoods section. The members discussed options for an access road to the property, scale of the buildings, any outdoor recreational use

on the property, the number of units being proposed, the target market for these units, and the issue of increased burden on town utilities. Mr. Farrell asked the Commission members for comments on the proposal as presented at this preliminary stage. The consensus of the members was that the plan at this point seemed to be on the right track, but that it would be prudent to encourage good communication between Mr. Farrell, the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board. Peter Smith suggested that more detailed information be furnished regarding plants, animals, and water sources. Duane suggested that Natural Heritage information be requested for the parcels. Mr. Farrell responded that he would request the information and also a wildlife assessment. The Commission requested a site walk of the area for Saturday April 19th at 10:15 am. The Planning Board will be invited to attend the site walk as well. The Commission thanked Jack Farrell for presenting the project early on in the process.

b) Richard MacLean – Ecological inventory – Mr. MacLean explained that he is a research associate at the University of New Hampshire, in the Department of Natural Resources for Dr. Frey and Dr. Ducey. He noted that he is working on a long term research project that will be a carbon inventory of the Lamprey River Watershed spanning the next 20 years or more. Mr. MacLean explained that as part of the project they will be looking for sites on parcels of preserved land and have identified a few in Durham. He noted that on the sites a soil pit would be dug and leaf catch baskets would be set out. Mr. MacLean asked the Commission for an appropriate contact to provide information regarding lands in Durham and also for him to provide with updates regarding the project. Duane Hyde responded that he would be pleased to act as the contact and provided Mr. MacLean with his contact information. The Commission thanked Mr. MacLean for taking the time to explain this project to the Commission.

3) Acceptance of March 13, 2008 and April 3, 2008 Minutes –

a) March 13, 2008 –

Dwight Baldwin moved to accept the minutes as written. This was seconded by Beryl Harper and approved unanimously. (note: Duane Hyde and Cathy Leach abstained from this vote, they were not present at the March 13, 2008 meeting).

b) April 3, 2008 – The review of these minutes was moved to the next meeting.

4) Ongoing Business

a) Wetlands Applications – George Thomas reported that after the Commission's review of the Jackson Landing project at the March meeting, he sent DES a letter stating the Commission's support of the project. He also reported that Charlie Hart on Cedar Point Road is proposing to remove a timber bulkhead approximately 30 feet long and replace it with riprap, a concrete pad and a 40' ramp to a floating dock. George explained that the bulkhead is in very poor condition and that the rest of the property has riprap. He also noted that the float will always be floating, there will be two posts for the float to ride up and down on and that the float and ramp will come out of the river in the winter, but the posts will

remain. George further noted that Pickering Marine Corporation will be doing the construction. He explained that he had gone to the site and felt that the proposal was an improvement. Duane asked the Commission if they felt it necessary to schedule a site walk. The consensus of the Commission was that they were comfortable with the project and felt that George's review of the site was adequate. George will email DES that the Commission has no comments on the project.

b) Land Protection Working Group – Duane Hyde reported that the Roselawn Farm project is scheduled to close on April 16th.

c) Town Owned Land/Conservation Easements – Beryl Harper reported that the subcommittee had met for the first time on March 25th. She noted the subcommittee consists of Cathy Leach, Cynthia Belowski, Dwight Baldwin, Beryl Harper, George Thomas and Duane Hyde. Beryl said a "field report" had been drafted which consists of a list of topics that should be addressed when an individual goes out to walk a property with stewardship and usage in mind. This draft was emailed to the subcommittee. She noted that a short list of properties was arrived at to start this process. Those properties are: Doe Farm, Long Marsh, Spruce Hole, Fogg Farm and Wagon Hill. Dwight noted that each subcommittee member would be volunteering for one of these properties. Beryl said that a date for their next meeting needed to be set and this would be done via email.

d) Mill Pond – Dwight Baldwin referred to the presentation given last month by Mike Lynch and noted that there are no changes to report.

e) Jackson's Landing – Dwight Baldwin reported that the Town Administration decided that any town owned property that will be undergoing modification should be handled under the normal planning board zoning application process. He said it was determined that the proposal for work on Depot Lot was not handled in this matter and therefore was referred to a Planning Board meeting. Dwight noted that at the Planning Board meeting there was public concern regarding the plan and it was decided that the Planning Board would go back to the site for an inspection and try to resolve the concerns. He said that if the Planning Board does not feel it can resolve the concerns they will bring the project to the Town Council. Dwight reminded the Commission of the history of this project; noting that it has been in process for 2 ½ years, 17 volunteers have worked on the project, there have been two public meetings to provide input and multiple generations of site plans brought to the council, the final plan was approved by the council, the Town has received funding to proceed with the work and the Council approved the acceptance of the funding. Cathy Leach noted that the agenda item to award this project was placed on the agenda for the next Town Council meeting. She noted that this does not mean the project will be awarded, but there at least will be discussion and that the Council may vote to award the project. Duane said that Cynthia Belowski had drafted a letter from the Commission to the Planning Board Chair stating the Commission's support of this project. The Commission held a short discussion regarding the letter and the member's support of the letter.

Beryl Harper moved to accept the draft letter as a final letter with the following correction, "...made no negative comments via email on March 16th to DES...". This was seconded by

Dwight Baldwin and approved unanimously. (Note: Duane Hyde abstained from this vote, he was not present at the March 13th meeting when the presentation on the project was made.)

5) Board and Committee Reports

- a) Town Council – Cathy Leach made no further report at this time.
- b) Planning Board – Stephen Roberts reported that the Caldarola project is still in process.
- c) Mill Plaza Planning Committee -- no report at this time.
- d) Lamprey River Advisory Committee – no report at this time.

6) Other Business

- a) Preparation for meeting with the Town Council – Duane discussed with the Commission the document that has been prepared for presentation to the Town Council and suggested that any comments/changes be sent to Dwight. The Commission discussed some points of the document and whether or not to change the order of items in the document. The Commission discussed with Cathy Leach what format the discussion with the Council will take. Cathy noted that the Council will appreciate receiving the document in advance for them to review prior to the meeting and at the meeting having one individual give a short introduction and then have one or two members available to respond to questions and comments by the Councilors. She said approximately 45 minutes was being allotted to this topic.

7) Administrative

- a) Correspondence -- none at this time.
- b) Next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday May 8, 2008 at 7 pm

8) Adjournment –

Beryl Harper moved to adjourn at 9:30 pm. This was seconded by Stephen Roberts and approved unanimously.

The April 10th, 2008 meeting of the Durham Conservation Commission adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sue Lucius
Durham Conservation Commission Recording Secretary