

Durham Land Stewardship Meeting

8 am 12/19/2014

Present: Ann Welsh (Chair, Cons Comm), Nate Troutrain (Rec Comm), Alfred Ackerman, Malin Clyde, Mike Lynch (Town), Dennis Meadows, Todd Selig (Town), Vin Dell'Ova (Ag Comm), David Potter (Agri. Committee), Dave Howland (Rec Committee)

Stoleworthy Sanctuary

Conservation Commission approved general idea of the schools working on a management plan or stewardship work on the Stoleworthy Sanctuary. Green Team wondering what next steps are, and how this property fits in list of land management planning. Property inventory

- On 2015 list to get a plan
- Need to get approval for each year's group of plans from the Cons Comm
- Vin would be interested in volunteering
- Keep line open – ask HS students, teachers, Green Team to present to committee regularly (perhaps through Vin)
- Vin can connect with Mary Caufield about next steps, find out if they (John Bromley, Green Team, students
- Everyone's very excited about this project
- Vin needs hours for Natural Resource Stewards

Timing of Meetings

Evenings – good for some citizens, harder for town workers

Try 9:00 a.m. – Fridays are good (3rd Friday of the month), at Town Hall

Committee Composition

2 people from each Ag, Cons Comm, Parks & Rec. Committees, and one from Trustees of Trust Fund.

- Trustees of Trust Fund have never come, shouldn't reserve a space for them
- How about including 3 general public

Purpose of the committee – discussion:

- Malin interested in connecting people to town lands and great assets owned by Town
- Todd said importance of collaboration working across committees on land management issues
- Dave H. said three Committees all have interests in town lands and interested public – here around table we can make decisions and problem solve around town lands in an efficient one-stop-shop
 - o Disagreements can be figured out around the table, build a consensus about decisions

- Looking at conservation projects – good to have this committee as a clearinghouse for values for land protection (e.g. Thompson property – what should we do with it? Ag. Land? Trails, Water protection?)
- Land Stewardship Committee provides recommendations that represent all three committees.
- Don't want to duplicate things. Where's the overlap? "Kaisan group of our lands" – feel ownership
- Coordinating is a really big part of our role. Sharing knowledge about things like grants for trails – good way to share knowledge across committees.
- Nate: Keep work focused on specific properties, focus on collaboration, not arbitration.
- Vin suggests getting volunteers from Natural Resource Stewards program who live in Durham – to help
- Develop expertise of each town property by different people on committee
- Decisions about all town lands – public use, recreational use, signage, trails, etc.
- Go down the list of land inventory

Broad agreement on makeup of Committees – voting rights are 9 members

- Each Commissions would appoint 2 members
- Committee itself could put general citizen names forward to the Council
- Votes would be to recommend things...
- Downside of formalizing this is that you actually have votes that could be in conflict with the individual Committees. What do we do about this? Do we need "authority" to make recommendations to Council?
- Dave – if we have the ability to vote, then we have that in our back pocket in case there is disagreement. Ex. Mill Plaza Study Committee rarely resorted to voting (aim for consensus, but at least have the votes)
- Credibility will come from our ability to problem-solve on land issues; it's all recommendations

Mike really finds this Committee very important. Management of property was by default in the Public Works Dept, but really no discussions about things. It was reactive and just happened. Wasn't really well thought out...responsive, but this committee gives everything validity and a well-thought process and plan. Mike really welcomes this Committee.

Todd will draft a charge for this Committee and send it out to review

Come back to group in January for discussion and have consensus; forward it to the Council, then move to request voting members.

We'd like to encourage non-voting contributions by the public

Goals for 2015

Ann would like to look at the Town's **easements** – we have rights that the Town has not exercised. These deserve attention.

Malin mentioned there will be a spring training on easement monitoring

Vin suggested **events** or **walks** to get people out on our town properties. Stefanie can help promote.

Produce a better map of town recreational properties – put it online on Town Website – can we get better real estate on the front page? Town recreation areas? Parks and Rec. Committee has been putting together on a map – don't have all the parcels included; Nate talked about a "trail of the week" in Friday Updates. – Nate volunteered to explore webpages; Land Stewardship Committee can help get stewardship plan information into the public (get property maps and uses on website)

Spend time at every meeting to focus on use on **Wagon Hill farm**

If we get RTC grant for **Oyster River Forest**, working with SCA and Town to get work done, and organizing workdays

Talk about maintenance of trails. Recreation Commission is interested in an **Adopt-a-trail** program; Trail Stewards program

Walking the borders of our town – Julian Smith volunteers every year to walk town boundaries (perambulation) - every 7 years; good goal to GPS the waypoints. Mike says it's already late...we can organize this as a group effort.

-Middle school in May has a service day in May...take 80-90 kids clean graveyards, but this could be a fun project. Would need more adult supervision – train parents. Get date on calendar to notify other towns.

Other Updates

- Got grants for land protection for Thompson property (town acquisition) and Hill's property (easement).
- RTP grant for new trails at Oyster River forest – fields are very open due to rabbit habitat work; steam through field needs an improved crossing; NRCS is going to use that crossing and use a temporary bridge for their management equipment; Ellen Snyder has been coordinating invasive plant work; road crossing for invasive plant equipment made a big mess, made Ellen concerned that this is a bad location for a crossing based on this experience.

- Our proposal was to put a permanent crossing in that problematic location – but we are now concerned that's a bad area; NRCS wants to cross in the lower area will be coming to the Conservation Commission to discuss the plan.
- NRCS will restore the lower area; Mike said we shouldn't build bridges twice
- Waterline for Spruce Hole project – Mike is thinking about gravel road off gravel road to ORF with gate. Needed to connect new well in Lee to the pipe in ORF road – laid the pipe already, how do want to restore that area. Project calls for it to be graded and then seeded. How much? Or should we develop a path to Spruce Hole – would become a main entrance to Spruce Hole bog.
 - Where would people park? It is a problem, but there is room for 6 cars now.
- Cottontail project on North 40 – January the work will get done; need to get articles in Friday Update. Charlie Moreno (forester) will manage the project, Mike is meeting him later today. Everything's coming together. Contract will be presented today? Charlie is coming ASAP to start the project but it is dependent on weather. Watson Road needs to be frozen to be able to handle logging equipment. It's in bad shape now already, could get worse from logging, but then we could use any income from the logging, but we could use that money to improve the road.
 - Malin will get new sign from UNHCE about cottontail habitat – will coordinate with Stefanie.
 - Ann will start including a story in Friday Updates
 - Mike will send info. About meeting with Charlie to Ann.