

TOWN OF DURHAM
Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 14, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM by Vice-Chairman Ralph Chase at the Durham Public Library. Chairman Brian Ameche arrived shortly after the meeting was called to order.

Members Present: Brian Ameche, Ralph Chase, Casey Cordes, Joe Dattilo, Bill LaFlamme, Bob Melvin

Approval of September minutes: Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Bob Melvin to approve the September 9, 2008 minutes as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Amendments to Agenda / Approval of October Agenda: Bob Melvin, seconded by Bill LaFlamme to approve the agenda as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Payment of Bills: \$15.00 to Pam Huntley for secretarial services. Casey Cordes, seconded by Joe Dattilo to approve payment of the bill as presented, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Session: Gene Chiappetta and John Mitchell of the Durham Fair Association were present to discuss the condition of Whites Farm after the fair. Paper and rubbish has been picked up. The ground is still very wet and once it dries up, the area will be raked and seeded. Ralph Chase inquired about the restoration of the Town Green. Gene and John gave an overview of the plan that has been approved. The area not only needs to be graded, but the clay subsoil needs to be broken up and drainage improved before the area is seeded.

Bob Melvin commented that a representative from the Durham Fair Association used to come before the Commission prior to the Durham Fair to discuss parking on Whites Farm and the contingency parking plans for too much rain. There was a past agreement for the transfer of one dollar from the Durham Fair Association to the Conservation Commission for use of Whites Farm for parking. Bob will look for a copy of that agreement.

Brian Ameche brought up the parking of overnight campers and discharge of sewage, an issue that was a problem in the past, though not in recent years. The Durham Fair Association requires that camper discharge pipes are sealed off, capped, and taped. These are inspected daily for compliance and will be removed immediately if found to be in violation.

Commission members commented on what a great job was done at the Fair this year despite the bad weather and the problems that resulted from all the rain.

2008-2009 Hunting Lottery: The hunting lottery is up and running. There were 61 hunters applying for a permit which is down from previous years. There are 38 slots for permits. There has been no feedback as yet.

Deerfield Farm – Melynda Naples: not in attendance

Curtis Woodlands – Sheehan Michael: Sheehan Michael was present to get a signature from the Commission on his Eagle Scout application. Brian Ameche signed the application.

Bob Melvin, seconded by Ralph Chase to make a change in the order of the agenda by moving item 11, Open forum with Property Stewards, ahead of item 9, Status of Proposed Open Space Acquisitions, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Open forum with Property Stewards – Whites Farm – Jack Stahl; Pent Road (Deerfield Farm) – Melynda Naples; Howd Road – Matt Reed; Pisgah Mountain - Andy Golschneider with Venture Crew 169; Jim Smigal with BSA Troop 27 and Christina Costas; Creampot Valley – George & Irene Roberts; Curtis Woodlands – Rob Williams; Portion of Wimler Property with Public Access – Dick Porter; and Sawmill Road – Ray Koba: George and Irene Roberts were in attendance. Irene Roberts brought up items that she reported on back in 2007 that have not been addressed. The lock on the Dead Hill Road gate has been damaged by an attempt to drill out the lock. The key won't work in the lock, so the gate cannot be unlocked to allow DEP Conservation Officers through to check complaints of vehicle use. The gate on Creampot Road is still chained and padlocked since a pin was broken. However, vehicles can get around the gate, so boulders should be placed on both sides of the gate. Ralph Chase is working with the Public Works department to get an additional gate installed on the Creampot Road side, further in from the current gate. George Roberts commented that ATV and 4-wheel drive traffic is much less that it used to be thanks to the DEP Conservation Officers. Bob Melvin suggested working with the Guilford Land Trust to see what they do to restrict vehicle access to their properties. George Roberts also commented on the importance of the gates in showing initiative on behalf of the Commission to restrict vehicle traffic. Luke Backus, representing BSA Troop 27, reported that the Troop will continue as property stewards for Pisgah Mountain.

Status of Proposed Open Space Acquisitions & Update on the New Phase of Open Space Acquisition Program - Czaja Property, Kosienki Property, Fulton Forbes Property, Flynn Property & Morrissey Property: Brian Ameche presented an additional property to be considered for purchase, the Morrissey property. This property was referred to the Commission by the First Selectman's Office. A site walk of all the properties will be scheduled.

Open Space Issues Reports – Dead Hill Road & Creampot Road Locks & Gates, Signs, Security, Maintenance at Deerfield Farms, Other: The new pin has not been ordered yet from Boudreau Welding by Rick Huntley. The third gate needs to be installed and Ralph Chase is following up with Public Works.

Chair's Report – New Business – None; Old Business -White's Farm Survey, Correspondence, Caturano Property, Open Space Calendar, Memorial Plantings Marker for Existing Memorial Plantings as follows: Edwin Eick – Tupelo; Jack Donadio – American Dogwood; Austin Ackerman – 3 American Hollies; Carl Otte – Sugar Maple, Frank Behrens - ? & Robert White – American Hornbeam; New Memorial Plantings for Roger Newton (white oak) & Charlie Wimler (TBD) planned for 2008. Replacement of 2 diseased maples cut down with water tolerant trees (TBD): Natureworks has contacted Bob Melvin about the 3 new trees to be planted. Bob and Ralph Chase will meet with Natureworks on Monday, October 20, 2008 to determine where the trees are to be planted. A crew from Natureworks will be dispatched to plant the trees. The three trees are a Swamp White Oak, River Birch, and Virginia Magnolia. The dedication ceremony will be in the spring of 2009. Ralph Chase reported that the maple tree died from the roots girdling the tree and not from the wet conditions.

Other Business: none

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Huntley
Recording Secretary

RECV'D: Office of the Town Clerk
October 20, 2008 at 9:30 am