

TOWN OF DURHAM
Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 13, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM by Co-Vice Chairman Ralph Chase at the Durham Public Library.

Members Present: Ralph Chase, Casey Cordes, Joe Dattilo, Rick Huntley, Bob Melvin

Approval of April minutes: Rick Huntley, seconded by Joe Dattilo to approve the April 8, 2008 minutes as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed with 3 abstentions by Casey Cordes, Rick Huntley, and Bob Melvin.

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

Payment of Bills: \$15.00 to Pam Huntley for secretarial services and \$68.00 to Boudreau Welding for 2 gate pins, and \$500 to Flanagan Associates for appraisal work on Blake/Milano property. Bob Melvin, seconded by Casey Cordes to approve payment of the bills as presented, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The work done by Allan's Tree Service came to \$70 over the \$500 that was previously authorized. An additional tree was dead and required removal. Rick Huntley, seconded by Bob Melvin to approve payment of \$570 to Allan's Tree Service for removal of 2 trees from the White's Farm Memorial Planting area, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Ralph Chase explained why we didn't use the tree service that has been contracted by the Town. Last year several attempts were made to get the tree service contractor down to White's Farm to take care of the Memorial trees. In the fall, Ralph made a request to tree warden, Terence Keenan, to get the contractor to clean up the Memorial area at White's Farm. The tree warden indicated that if the contractor did not respond to go ahead and get the work done. Since there was no response through the fall and winter, Ralph contacted Allan's Tree Service this spring to get the work done.

Public Session: Pat Benjamin was present to represent the Caturano family. The Inland Wetlands Commission (IWC) ordered them to remove fill that was placed in the wetlands. In addition, there is a green house that is build in the wetland and IWC wants at least a 4:1 ratio to convey in open space over to the Town to allow the green house to remain. The amount is 40,000 square feet in a conservation easement. There was consensus from the Commission that a buffer along the property line is preferred over a square parcel. Mr. Benjamin will flag the proposed area and the Commission will schedule a site walk after that.

Site Development Plan Review – James & Joan Reinhart – Haddam Quarter Rd: Pat Benjamin was present to represent Reinhart family. Discussion followed. Casey Cordes, seconded by Bob Melvin to recommend to Planning & Zoning to accept the conservation easement as presented with the addition of the continuation of the easement, similar in width to the Town's property line. Motion passed unanimously.

Site Development Plan Review – John Marotta – Corner Routes 68 & 157: John Corona was present to represent Mr. Marotta. Discussion followed. No comment from the Commission.

Blake Property – 1147 New Haven Road – offer to purchase 11.8 Acres – Chuck Haller: Discussion of the preliminary appraisal report followed. The property is not developable. The Commission does not wish to proceed any further with the appraisal process at this time.

Request to use White's Farm – Wilbur & Orville Society – 6/11, 6/25, 7/9, 7/23, 8/13 & 8/27 – 5 PM to sundown – Lisa Pacelli: Bob Melvin, seconded by Casey Cordes to approve the use of Whites Farm by the Wilbur & Orville Society for the following dates in 2008 from approximately 5PM until sundown: 6/11, 6/25, 7/9, 7/23, 8/13, and 8/27 provided that proof of insurance is submitted, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

DEP Request for Dam Inspection – Cream Pot Dam aka Arrigonis Pond Dam 1: The Commission is not certain that the dam is located on Town property. Bob Melvin will check to see whether or not there is still a pond/dam.

Status of Proposed Open Space Acquisitions & Update on the New Phase of Open Space Acquisition Program:
No updates.

Open Space Issues Reports – Dead Hill Road & Creampot Road Gates, Signs, Security, Maintenance at Deerfield Farms, Other: New pins for the Creampot Road gate were delivered to Brian Ameche. Casey Cordes will check to see if the new pin has been installed in the gate. Tree warden, Terence Keenan, reminded Ralph Chase that Melynda Naples, Deerfield Farms, has some of her fencing attached to trees and needs to remove the that fencing and attach it to posts.

Open forum with Property Stewards – Final Roster: Whites Farm – Jack Stahl; Pent Road (Deerfield Farm) – Melynda Naples; Howd Road – Matt Reed; Pisgah Mountain - Andy Golschneider with BSA Troop 27; Creampot Valley – George & Irene Roberts; Curtis Woodlands – Rob Williams; Portion of Wimler Property with Public Access – Dick Porter; and Sawmill Road – Ray Koba: No reports from the stewards.

Chair's Report – New Business -White's Farm Survey, Correspondence, Czaja Property; Old Business – Giuseppe Caturano Greenhouses; Open Space Calendar, Memorial Plantings Marker for Existing Memorial Plantings for Edwin Eick – Tupelo; Jack Donadio – American Dogwood; Austin Ackerman – 3 American Hollies; Carl Otte - ?, Frank Behrens - ?& Mr. White - ?; New Memorial Plantings for Roger Newton (white oak) & Charlie Wimler (TBD). Replace 2 maples with water tolerant trees in the spring of '08: Bascom & Benjamin have been asked to do a survey on White's Farm showing the line 500 feet from dwellings on Maple Avenue. Monuments will be placed in the ground along the 500 foot line down to ground level so as not to interfere with mowing. The mapping also showed monuments 500 feet from Route 68. The Commission is not aware of any regulation that would require marking from a highway, so Pat Benjamin will find out the reasoning for placing those monuments. The Commission can mark the line with "No Discharge of Firearms Beyond this Point" signs.

Ralph read a letter from Kenneth Czaja in response to the open space mailings that were sent out in April 2008. The Commission should encourage the State of Connecticut to acquire this property and to waive the A-2 survey requirement. Elizabeth Brothers is a contact in Connecticut DEP Land Acquisition.

Other Business: John Corona brought up the growing problems with the road system and availability of designated parking areas at White's Farm. The Commission will schedule a site walk to review the road and make some recommendations to the Town. He also expressed concern over no controlled access to the property after dark when ATV use is most common. The major problem with gating entrances to the area is getting someone to unlock and lock the gate every day.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Huntley
Recording Secretary