

**TOWN OF DURHAM**  
**Conservation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, December 8, 2015**  
**7:00 at the Durham Public Library**

**Members present:** Carl Dahlman, Rick Huntley, Bill LaFlamme, Lucy Meigs, Bob Melvin, Bob Thody and Bill Ward

Excused: Jon Herzig, Josh Miller

**Call to Order/Roll Call:** Rick Huntley called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**Amendments to Agenda/Approval of Agenda:** Rick Huntley stated that the incorrect version of the agenda was sent and posted. The correct agenda was distributed. Bill Melvin, seconded by Bill LaFlamme to approve the December agenda as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of November 2015 regular meeting minutes:** Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Carl Dahlman to approve the November 2015 regular meeting minutes as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed with unanimously.

**Payment of Bills:** Bill Ward, seconded by Bob Melvin to approve payment of \$30 to Pam Huntley for secretarial services, made a motion. Motion passed with one abstention by Rick Huntley.

**Public Session:** Tara and Michael Hoppes of 56 Brittany Drive were present. Mrs. Hoppes read from a statement expressing concerns over the behavior of the Curtis Woodlands property steward, Charles Ingold, and requesting that he no longer be the property steward. The Hoppes have removed vehicles that were parked on the right-of-way as requested. They would like to be part of the discussion for installation of a second gate. They questioned keeping the right-of-way clear along their property line when it is not clear further down. Discussion ensued. Bob Melvin commented that the adjacent property owners further down the road own to the center of the road since it is an abandoned road. If the other property owners don't wish to keep the road clear, that is their decision. Rick Huntley stated that it is a passable right-of-way and the town wishes to keep it that way for access to the open space property. Rick Huntley also indicated that despite initial attempts to have a good neighbor relationship, actions taken by the Hoppes led the Commission members to believe that they do not respect the property line. This made the relationship seem as though it was going in the same direction as with the previous property owner. Lucy Meigs spoke on behalf of the property steward. She has worked with him on the property from time to time removing invasive plants and he is doing a wonderful job. He is however a man of few words and not responding when spoken to is how he is if he doesn't know you. Lucy continued that he has cleared invasive plants and reported when off road vehicles are on the property. Rick stated that both sides have heard each other and that the relationship moving forward will be improved. Charles spoke in response to the concerns raised by the Hoppes. He took extreme exception to the use of the terms "sneaking and hiding" in describing his presence in the woods. Charles invited Mr. Hoppes to join him as a property steward. Lucy reiterated how much the Commission appreciates all the work Charles has done on the property.

**Property Steward Reports/Parcel Status Updates**

- Whites Farm – Jack Stahl: no report. Bob Melvin reported Jack has moved.
- Pent Road/Parmelee Hill Road/David Road – Melynda Naples: Melynda reported that the well has produced enough water lately. Groups and visitors continue to come to Deerfield Farm. The UV treatment system is installed. She had a question about what applications to remove invasive plants were used at Curtis Woodlands. The invasive plants are being removed by hand. Previously when the upper field was cleared of Russian and/or autumn olive as part of an Eagle Scout project the stumps only were treated with something like Round-Up.
- Howd Road – Josh Miller: no report.
- Pisgah Mountain and Chalker Brook Valley – Bill LaFlamme & Rick Huntley: Lucy Meigs has walked part of the property recently and noted no problems.
- Curtis Woodlands – Charles Ingold & Sheehan Michael: Rick Huntley read Charles Ingold's report. There was an incident of ATV in the middle of November. Sheehan Michael has cleared the lower trail from the parking lot to the brook and all the way around.
- Wimler Property – Dick Porter: no report.
- Sawmill Road – Ray Koba: no report.

## *Old and New Business*

**Status/review of proposed open-space regulations revisions:** no update.

**Status of Review of Plan of C & D:** no update

**Index of all open areas as mandated by the Connecticut General Statutes, Section 7-131a (b):** Rick Huntley requested help from Dan Bourret with updated maps and index. The most recent open space map was done in 2008. Rick has concerns with the legend on the current map and making a distinction between open space and easements. Dan recommended waiting a year for work on the index when he would have more time to assist the Commission. He may also be available to help with training in ArcGIS. Rick would like better maps in place for the properties that are part of the hunting lottery by May 15<sup>th</sup>. There was a brief discussion about tree stand use and removal of the stand after the end of hunting season.

**Sign for Memorial Tree Grove:** Rick Huntley marked the location for installation. He will check to see if it has been installed.

**Status of ERT Comprehensive Management Plan Request:** Rick Huntley is exploring other avenues to get an RFP drafted.

**Website Content for Conservation Commission:** Members should continue to think about content to post.

**Further discussion of Gate Lock for Dunn Hill Road:** Rick Huntley stated that the idea for locking the gate is to have a piece of chain, lock for the number of locks needed. The Hoppes who were still present have no problem with locking of the gate. Mr. Hoppes indicated that the other property owner was willing to share the lock with them. The police and fire department will need a copy of the Town's key.

**Barbed Wire at Curtis Woodlands:** There is barbed wire along the stone wall on the right-of-way. Mr. Hoppes asked about removing the barbed wire. Bill Ward, seconded by Lucy Meigs to authorize Mr. Hoppes to remove barbed wire from the stone wall along the shared right-of-way at Curtis Woodlands once a liability waiver is filed, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Meeting Dates for 2016:** Rick Huntley, seconded by Bob Melvin to set the meeting dates for 2016 on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 PM in the Durham Library unless otherwise noted. The 2016 dates are January 12, February 9, March 8, April 12, May 10 (Town Hall), June 14, July 12, August 9, September 13, October 11, November 8 and December 13. Motion passed unanimously.

**Report of Co-Chairmen:** Rick Huntley reported on his activities since the last meeting. He walked a section of Curtis Woodlands and spoke with Mr. Hoppes on November 14. He attended the GrowSmart regional summit on November 19. He spoke with Laura Francis regarding Mrs. Hoppe's concerns the week of November 30<sup>th</sup>. Rick received an email from Jason Englehart regarding mapping trails and is asking for coordination amongst all users and property owners in the area.

Sheehan Michael asked for information regarding Swamp Lane. He is on the Clean Energy and Sustainability Task Force and in order to get some funds they need to start work on gaining interest in creating a multi-use recreation path on the old existing road. Rick Huntley suggested that Sheehan could get more information with help from Town Hall.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Huntley  
Recording Secretary