

**TOWN OF DURHAM**  
**Conservation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, January 12, 2016**  
**7:00 at the Durham Public Library**

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

Excused: Jon Herzig, Bill LaFlamme

**Call to Order/Roll Call:** Rick Huntley called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

**Amendments to Agenda/Approval of Agenda:** Rick Huntley suggested amending the agenda by the adding of budget discussion under *Old and New Business*. Bill Ward, seconded by Bob Melvin to approve the January agenda as amended, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of December 2015 regular meeting minutes:** Bob Melvin, seconded by Bill Ward to approve the December 2015 regular meeting minutes as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed with one abstention by Josh Miller.

**Payment of Bills:** Bob Melvin, seconded by Lucy Meigs to approve payment of \$25 to Pam Huntley for secretarial services, made a motion. Motion passed with one abstention by Rick Huntley. Bob Melvin, seconded by Bob Thody to approve renewal of membership for 2016 to the Middlesex Land Trust at the same rate as 2015, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously. Bob Melvin, seconded by Bob Thody to approve payment of \$1,000 to Sue White for 5 mowings at White's Farm, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Public Session:** Frank DeFelice from the Planning and Zoning Commission was present to discuss the Plan of Conservation and Development (Plan of C&D). He provided a copy of the Conservation section. There is no need to worry about any data in the Conservation section. He also provided a draft copy of the Bike/Pedestrian Plan. Rick Huntley stated that he requested that a plan for a bike/pedestrian way between Durham and Middlefield be included in the Plan of C&D. Rick Huntley stated that he and Bob Melvin have already reviewed the section extensively and submitted comments previously to Geoff Colegrove. Frank DeFelice requested that any of that information the Commission has be forwarded on to him as soon as possible. There are no more extensions to get the plan done. The plan has to be approved by June 30, 2016. Once the plan is approved, the Planning and Zoning Commission plans to go immediately into a revision cycle of the plan by concentrating on a couple of sections per year. Frank is considering holding a visioning charrette, possibly February 13<sup>th</sup> at the Fire House. This date is not definite. Bob Melvin asked about getting the maps in the plan updated. Frank responded that maps that were unsatisfactory could be left out of this version. Revised maps could be included in an amended version of the plan. Frank also stated that "fee in lieu of" rather than conservation easement is growing in popularity among towns. Rick Huntley commented on the charge of the Conservation Commission to have an index of open space areas in town.

**Property Steward Reports/Parcel Status Updates**

- Whites Farm – Need new Steward: Rick Huntley talked with Jack Stahl, who has moved, and thanked him for his years of service as steward.
- Pent Road/Parmelee Hill Road/David Road – Melynda Naples: Rick Huntley needs to follow-up on the gray water discharge management issue. Josh Miller asked about doing something to reclaim the edges of the fields on open space properties. Rick Huntley suggested adding to future leases a requirement to maintain the edges of fields so that they don't become overgrown.
- Howd Road – Josh Miller: Josh has observed use of the parking area. There was discussion about allowing bow hunting on the property. Rick Huntley, seconded by Josh Miller to authorize bow hunting on the Howd Road parcel commensurate with the number of permits per acre on the Curtis Woodlands property, made a motion. Discussion followed about informing adjacent property owners of the area that it would be open for the next hunting lottery. There could be a notice in the Town Times and/or a mailing to the adjacent property owners. Motion passed unanimously.
- Pisgah Mountain and Chalker Brook Valley – Bill LaFlamme & Rick Huntley: Rick Huntley had a conversation with George and Irene Roberts. Rick showed a draft copy of a map of the tri-town open space, land trust and municipal properties, being called "Rocklandia", that shows the trails through the area.
- Curtis Woodlands – Charles Ingold & Sheehan Michael: Rick Huntley read Charles Ingold's report. He has started to work on

cutting bittersweet. Sheehan has cleared the trail, but the northern point of the trail needs to be relocated because the brook cuts across the trail in several places now. The Commission's request to have items moved off the right-of-way have been met. There is a deer stand that has been up for over a year. Rick Huntley commented on looking into the treatment of winged euonymus stumps by carefully painting the stumps with an herbicide. Rick will look into a variance of the town ordinance for that type of application.

- Wimler Property – Dick Porter: no report.
- Sawmill Road – Ray Koba: no report. Rick has asked Laura Francis to provide the contact information for people that have expressed an interest in becoming stewards.

### ***Old and New Business***

**Budget Discussion:** Rick Huntley has submitted the draft budget for 2016-17. He has increased the maintenance and mowing category to \$3,500 from \$3,000. After speaking with Roberts, there is increased parking at the end of Dead Hill Road by users of the mountain bike trail. He recommends that the Commission change its focus from a parking area on Howd Road to the end of Dead Hill Road. Lucy Meigs, seconded by Bob Melvin to request funding for a parking area at the end of Dead Hill Road for the 2016-17 budget year instead of Howd Road, made a motion. Bill Ward noted if wetlands were involved to get the appropriate permits from Inland Wetlands. Motion passed unanimously. Rick also added \$3,000 for comprehensive management planning for Curtis Woodlands.

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

**Status of Review of Plan of C & D:** discussed under Public Session.

**Index of all open areas as mandated by the Connecticut General Statutes, Section 7-131a (b):** no update.

**Status of ERT Comprehensive Management Plan Request:** Rick Huntley checked with the Council on Soil and Water Conservation and they did not know what the future of the ERT would be or if services previously promised would be available. He also checked with the Conservation District and the COG staff and they are not provide assistance. Geoff Colegrove has indicated he cannot work on it. Rick Huntley received an offer to have a forestry management plan done on Curtis Woodlands. He would rather have a comprehensive management plan that would include forestry management.

**Website Content for Conservation Commission:** Carl Dahlman suggested getting a summer intern to work on the website. The tougher job is to create the content. A subcommittee consisting of Rick Huntley, Lucy Meigs and Josh Miller was formed to work on the content for the website. They will meet on January 20, 2016 at 4 PM in the library.

**Report of Co-Chairmen:** Rick Huntley reported on his meeting with John Jenkins from Public Works. Any projects that require installing posts are on hold due to lack of post hole drilling equipment. Projects discussed include gate at Howd Road parking area; gate at Howd Road across from Tri-Mountain Road; parking area for Howd Road sledding facility; move unlocked gate on Cream Pot Road; move existing boulders and install gate on woods road off Pisgah Road; parking area at end of Dead Hill Road; parking lot off Rt. 17 – Carl Otte Meadow (Sawmill Road); gate for bar way along right-of-way at Curtis Woodlands; additional posts and rails at existing Curtis Woodlands parking area; and most of the posts along the road at White's Farm will be removed. Sherry Hill asked about the skating pond. The skating pond is not managed by the Conservation Commission. The skating pond is not in great shape for skating. There is a lot of vegetation that has to be cut down in the pond every year and it doesn't freeze well because of the depth of the water. Rick reviewed mail received.

Bob Thody wished to thank Rick for all the work he does on behalf of the Commission.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Huntley  
Recording Secretary