

TOWN OF DURHAM
Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 8, 2016
7:00 at the Durham Public Library

Members present: Jon Herzig, Rick Huntley, Bill LaFlamme, Lucy Meigs, Bob Melvin, Bob Thody (7:26 PM) and Bill Ward

Excused: Carl Dahlman, Josh Miller

Call to Order/Roll Call: Rick Huntley called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.

Amendments to Agenda/Approval of Agenda: Rick Huntley requested amending the agenda by the adding of Black Sheep Squadron annual request to use Whites Farm under *Old and New Business*. Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Bob Melvin to approve the March agenda as amended, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of January 2016 regular meeting minutes: Bob Melvin, seconded by Bill Ward to approve the January 2016 regular meeting minutes as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed with abstentions by Jon Herzig and Bill LaFlamme.

Payment of Bills: Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Bob Melvin to approve payment of \$35 to Pam Huntley for secretarial services, made a motion. Motion passed with one abstention by Rick Huntley.

Public Session: none

Property Steward Reports/Parcel Status Updates

- Whites Farm – Need new Steward: Rick Huntley reported there have been two reports of vehicle damage to the field, one in December and one in February. The February incident has been referred to Trooper Morello and a report will be filed. Rick will meet with John Jenkins to assess the damage and get an estimated cost for repairs. Rick asked if there was consensus amongst the member to support offering community service if appropriate. Discussion ensued about the damage to the field getting repaired. Consensus was that there should be restitution for the damage and to support community service if appropriate and monitored. Bill LaFlamme volunteered as the Steward. Bob Melvin stated that he will clean out the bluebird boxes.
- Pent Road/Parmelee Hill Road/David Road – Melynda Naples: Lucy Meigs talked with Melynda and there are no issues to report. There has been no further follow-up done to address the discharge issue. Rick Huntley believes that 18 months' notice before the end of the current lease happens this year. The Commission will need to determine whether to negotiate another five year lease or put out requests for proposals. Bob Melvin suggested the Commission get input from the Board of Selectmen.
- Howd Road – Josh Miller: Rick Huntley stated that the Howd Road lease is in the final year. A new request for proposals is needed. Rick will start the process with Town Hall. Objective evaluation criteria is needed as well as consideration for any additional requirements/conditions in the lease.
- Pisgah Mountain and Chalker Brook Valley – Bill LaFlamme & Rick Huntley: Lucy Meigs reported the Mountain Bike trail has a bridge over the brook. She passed around a picture. Rick Huntley stated that it probably should have gone before Inland Wetland Commission, so we should touch base with them. The Ericksen property off Cream Pot Road is for sale. This is the property across from the parking area on Cream Pot Road. There was discussion about whether the Commission should pursue acquisition. Rick will check with the Town and Lucy Meigs will check with the Middlesex Land Trust about any interest in acquisition. Lucy Meigs will replace Bill LaFlamme as Steward.
- Curtis Woodlands – Charles Ingold & Sheehan Michael: no issues to report. Projects for the property are still on the schedule.
- Wimler Property – Dick Porter: no report.
- Sawmill Road – Ray Koba: no report.

Old and New Business

Request for use of Whites Farm Field for Relay for Life Parking Saturday June 18 from 4-10 pm - Deborah J. Sokol: Rick Huntley reported on the recommended areas (between the north-south gravel road and swale, using the east side first, and parallel parking on the west side if it is dry enough) for parking. Last year the event did not need to use the field for parking. Rick Huntley, seconded by Bill Ward to approve the use of Whites Farm for Relay for Life Parking on June 18, 2016 from 4-10 PM only in the recommended areas with the appropriate proof of insurance and provided that the area is dry enough, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Request for use of Whites Farm Field for 2016 by Cato Rocket Club – Rick Comshaw: Rick Comshaw was present to request the use of the field on the third Saturday of each month. He also requested permission to use low wattage speakers in order to comply with the safety code for an audible countdown. They have been experimenting with various options in order to comply with the safety code. Last year they had a “build and fly” with Cub Scouts in Durham and coordinated with TARC teams. Rick Huntley stated if the TARC teams are flying rockets on dates other than the Cato Rocket Club, then they need to get approval to do so and provide the appropriate insurance. Rick Comshaw will reiterate that with the teams. In addition, no one is allowed to retrieve a rocket that goes over Maple Avenue or across the brook. A board member will make arrangements to retrieve the rocket. He also stated that there is a correction to be made about the rockets that can be launched. The Skidmark and Thunder are a type and not a class. Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Bill Ward, to approve the use of Whites Farm field on the third Saturday of the month in 2016 with all the provisions and conditions listed and to allow the use of a low watt speaker system in order to experiment to find a solution to comply with the safety code for an audible countdown and to have a demonstration day of the system on June 18, 2016, made a motion. Discussion ensued. Bill Ward asked if there were use conflicts with the Black Sheep Squadron. Rick Comshaw responded that both groups work well together. Bill Ward suggested notifying adjacent property owners about possibly allowing the use of a low wattage speaker system. Rick Huntley will notify the adjacent property owners about the demonstration day. Motion passed unanimously. Rick Comshaw stated that if there is anything the Club can do at Whites Farm, just let them know. He also presented a donation to the Conservation Commission from the Cato Rocket Club.

The club restricts somewhat noisy motors to after lunch time launches. Skidmark and Thunder type motors greater than G are prohibited. F20 econojets, G skidmarks and I motors launch after lunch. Model rockets don't carry altimeters, but H and I rockets may not go above 2500 feet. Written simulations are required by members flying these rockets to prove the rockets won't go above 2500 feet. Prior conditions include proof of appropriate insurance, no use of a loud speaker, rockets are labeled with the club name, and the launch site is located as far north to the hedgerow side of the field as wind conditions permit. Launches are from 9AM to 5PM.

Mowing Schedule for Whites Farm 2016: Postpone until next meeting. The Commission needs to set a date to start mowing that has the least reasonable impact on grasslands birds while still making it worthwhile to get mowed without having to pay for mowing.

Request by Black Sheep Squadron for annual use of Whites Farm Field for 2016: Bob Melvin, seconded by Bob Thody to approve the request to use Whites Farm by the Black Sheep Squadron for 2016 provided appropriate insurance is provided, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Upcoming Conferences: Connecticut Land Conservation – March 19th and Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources – March 14th. Lucy Meigs provided a contact in Wallingford to Charles Ingold on invasive species.

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

Status of Review of Plan of C&D: Comments on the plan were submitted by Rick Huntley and Bob Melvin.

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

Status Comprehensive Management Plan: Rick Huntley has drafted an email to the forester who contacted the Commission. He will let him know that the Commission wishes to pursue a comprehensive management plan for Curtis Woodlands, but will keep him in mind.

Website Content for Conservation Commission: Josh Miller, Lucy Meigs and Rick Huntley met in January. They will need to meet again.

Report of Co-Chairmen: Rick Huntley distributed copies of *The Habitat*. Rick attended the budget meeting for the Commission and requested additional funding for Planning. The parking area request has switched from Howd Road to Dead Hill Road. Rick received an email from Tim Larkin about the sugar maples that suffered deer damage along Howd Road. Tim will put together a work plan to replace those trees. The request to nominate an Aquarion Environmental Champion was received. A request for hunting standards on the open space properties with regard to hunting stands was received. Stands can remain until the end of the season and then need to be removed. Bill LaFlamme commented that the hunting application this year will include a request for stands to be labeled. There was discussion about allowing hunting permits on the Howd Road property and how many. It was determined to allow the same amount of bow hunting permits as is allowed on Curtis Woodlands which is seven.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Huntley
Recording Secretary