

TOWN OF DURHAM
Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 13, 2016
7:00 at the Durham Public Library

Members present: Carl Dahlman (7:10), Rick Huntley, Bill LaFlamme, Lucy Meigs, Bob Melvin, and Josh Miller

Excused: Jon Herzig, Bob Thody and Bill Ward

Call to Order/Roll Call: Rick Huntley called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Amendments to Agenda/Approval of Agenda: Rick Huntley added the following amendments: move the Property Steward Report for Sawmill Road to the top of the list, add Offer of Land and 2017-18 Budget under Old and New Business. Motion by Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Lucy Meigs to approve the December agenda as amended. Motion passed with one abstention by Carl Dahlman.

Approval of October 2016 regular meeting minutes: Motion by Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Josh Miller approve the October 2016 regular meeting minutes as distributed. Motion passed with one abstention by Carl Dahlman.

Payment of Bills: Motion by Bob Melvin, seconded by Bill LaFlamme to approve payment of \$20 to Pam Huntley for secretarial services. Motion passed with abstentions by Carl Dahlman and Rick Huntley.

Public Session: None.

Property Steward Reports/Parcel Status Updates

- Sawmill Road (Otte Meadows) – Ray Koba: Ray Koba was present. There was discussion about the beaver dam and whether there are adverse impacts to property. The Commission approved a motion made at the March 12, 2013 meeting regarding beaver removal - *Rick Huntley, seconded by Bill Ward to recommend Public Works pursue alternative measures to handle water levels due to the beaver problem in the area off Saw Mill Road and should those measures prove to be ineffective, pursue trapping of the beavers in accordance with DEEP regulations, made a motion.* Bob Melvin commented that the beavers should be left alone unless there is property damage and that the Commission should be contacted before trapping is authorized. Motion by Lucy Meigs, seconded by Bob Melvin to reaffirm the March 12, 2013 motion stated above. Motion passed with one abstention by Carl Dahlman. Ray Koba reported no issues on the property. There is a hunter's stand that has been there for a couple of years. Stands should be removed after each season. Ray expressed a concern about the parking area on David Road that people may not be aware of hunting on the property during hunting season. He suggested a notice should be posted.
- White Farm – Bill LaFlamme: Bob Melvin received a quote for Memorial Grove tree replacements of \$1,325. The commission would like the quote in writing and whether it includes planting the trees. Sheehan Michael offered to get an additional quote.
 - Discussion of Response to Damage by Vehicle Reported on December 2, 2016: A couple of youths were caught by State Trooper Larry Morello. The recommendation is to send them to the Juvenile Review Board. A list of questions from the review board were answered as follows.
 - What was your reaction at the time of the incident? *Disappointment that it has happened yet again.*
 - How do you feel about what happened? *We don't want it to happen anymore.*
 - What has been the hardest part? *The frustration that it keeps happening and the cost of repair.*
 - How did your family and friends react they heard about the incident? *There should be consequences for vandalizing town property.*
 - What would you like from the boys? *Fix the damaged areas and if it is at a cost to the town, to get restitution. An additional suggestion was for the boys to write a letter to the editor of the Town Times stating that it is not the right thing to do, that you will get caught and there will be consequences.*
 - Pent Road/Parmelee Hill Road/David Road – Melynda Naples: Melynda was present. Melynda had a question about where hunters with hunting permits were supposed to park.
 - Deerfield Farm Lease Subcommittee Meeting Discussion Review: There was review and discussion of the answers from the subcommittee which are included at the end of these minutes. The Selectmen

have also been asked to answer the “considerations” questions. Lucy Meigs suggested considering 5 year renewals clauses at the 5 year and 10 year mark.

- Deerfield Farm Waste Management Issue Update: Rick Huntley has been working with the Conservation District to get 319 Grant funding for the project.
- Well Issue: The well has been good since Thanksgiving and the water tank has been returned to Public Works. There is no additional information about drilling a new well. Discussion ensued as to whether a new well would solve the water issue. Melynda asked if it would be possible to keep the old well active along with a new well. It takes at least 600 gallons a day just to water the cows.
- Howd Road – Josh Miller: Josh reported no updates at this time.
 - Lease RFP: There is additional work to do and may need to resubmit.
- Pisgah Mountain and Chalker Brook Valley – Lucy Meigs & Rick Huntley: The gate moving approval letters have been received. A meeting with Steve Ericksen still needs to be arranged before he signs the approval letter.
- Curtis Woodlands – Charles Ingold & Sheehan Michael: Charles reported via email that all is well on the property. There are four tree stands on the property. They will be removed in the spring if they have not been removed. Charles planted 110 acorns. There was discussion about the next steps for the field in order to restore it to grassland. Steps included plowing up the woody brush, soil testing, planting corn for a few years and perhaps followed by alfalfa.
- Wimler Property – Dick Porter: no report.

Old and New Business

Meeting Dates for 2017: The meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month – January 10, February 14, March 14, April 11, May 9, June 13, July 11, August 8, September 12, October 10, November 14 and December 12. All meetings are scheduled for 7 PM in the Durham Public Library except the May meeting which is scheduled for 7 PM in the Town Hall. Motion by Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Josh Miller to approve the 2017 meeting dates as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Offer of Land: The recommendation of the Commission is not to purchase the land offered.

2017-18 Budget: Rick Huntley will submit the proposed budget. Rick suggested that the technical services line item should be increased in order to support projects the Commission is proposing.

Status of proposed open-space regulations revisions: The Town Attorney has emailed the draft with edits. Rick Huntley will move the document forward in the process.

Index of all open areas as mandated by the Connecticut General Statutes, Section 7-131a (b): Rick Huntley reported the updated system for Assessor’s mapping will be online soon.

Status of Curtis Woodlands Comprehensive Management Plan: no update.

Website Content for Conservation Commission: no update.

Report of Co-Chairmen: Rick Huntley attended the All Committee meeting. Bob Melvin commented that the bluebird houses need to be cleaned out. Lucy Meigs read a recent article that suggested the houses not be cleaned out.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Huntley
Recording Secretary

Considerations for New Lease

Subcommittee (Rick Huntley, Carl Dahlman, Bill LaFlamme) discussion on December 4, 2016 at Durham Town Hall from 5 PM to 7 PM.

- Are we getting what the public wants/needs from current operation?
In general yes. There have been no requests for changes.
- Are we happy with the current level of public benefit?
Yes, but expanded public access/programs would be good.
- What is public benefit/cost of opening the property up to other potential uses/users?
Benefits – Opportunity for other ideas to be proposed
Open government practice
Costs – Potential for folks that like the status quo to be unhappy – negative public opinion
Potential for increased administrative costs – time requirements
- Is the Town getting a good deal currently?
Yes, we could be have to pay an administrator to provide the level of outdoor recreational access to farming that we have now.
- Are there additional activities that we would like to see that are not occurring now? (Summer camp program and/or community gardening for example)
More coordination with the Recreation Department
- Is administrative oversight available to have a more complicated/expanded list of conditions?
Not readily apparent that we currently have the resources to do more
In setting a price for a lease, is it still the primary objective to meet the costs associated with owning the property?
Management fee? – Potential lease component, other cost items for lease valuation
 - Typically, these costs include:
 - Insurance
 - Repairs
 - Other?
- How long should the term of the lease be?
Minimum of 10 years
 - Is it possible to do a long term rolling lease?
Possibly too complicated
 - Should it be public policy to open the property up for other options periodically?
 - If so, what should the length of time be?

Consensus of the subcommittee was that a new RFP should be done for the lease.

There was discussion about conducting an online survey for public input about uses of the property that are within the guidelines of the property. A public forum can be held during a regular meeting. Rick Huntley will draft a preamble paragraph for the “Considerations for a New Lease” to list the restrictions for use of the property based upon the *Land and Water Conservation Fund State Assistance Program Federal Financial Assistance Manual*. This manual provides documentation for compliance with restrictions of the use of property due to the federal funding used for purchase.