

Conservation Commission

Wednesday, June 4, 2008
Corner Meeting House
Belmont, New Hampshire

Members Present:	Chairman K. Knowlton, N. Wederski(7:15), S. Rolfe,
Members Absent:	W. Peterson(u), D. Naiva(e), G. Wells-Kay(e), J. Pike(u)
Alternates Present:	M. McLetchie
Alternates Absent:	M. Lewandoski(u)
Staff:	R. Ball, D. Rollins

The meeting began as an informal discussion since there were only three members present.

FUNDING OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSERVATION LANDS:

Dijit Taylor was present to give the members information about possible funding sources to acquire property in Belmont. She is the Director of the Center for Land Conservation Assistance of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.

The Center for Land Conservation Assistance provides support and assistance to land trusts, conservation commissions and others seeking to conserve undeveloped land in New Hampshire through direct assistance, coordination and education, access to training and funding, and referrals.

K. Knowlton told her that the Commission would like to acquire as much property along the Tioga River as they could. They did acquire a big piece at the end of town abutting Northfield which is on the Tioga and have several parcels along the middle.

They asked her to come and give the members ideas on how to get funding for acquiring properties. He told her they get 100% of the land use change tax each year.

N. Wederski arrived at 7:15 p.m.

Chairman Knowlton opened the meeting at 7:15 p.m. and appointed M. McLetchie as a voting member for tonight's meeting.

Ms. Taylor first suggested that the Commission could go to the town for assistance. K. Knowlton said that wasn't an option since they already receive the land use change tax. She said if they

secured the majority of the funds they could go to the town. They would need to sell it to the town and show them how it would benefit the residents, if it could be used for recreation for example. They could get recreation groups involved who would use it. They could show the town what the cost would be to the town if the parcel was developed.

Ms. Taylor said another option would be to check and see if there's a wealthy individual in town or smaller trusts who would be interested in donating if they have a particular property they are hoping to acquire. She said if it's a large piece they could carve off a portion to sell and use those funds.

She said they could consider if the abutters of the property they are looking at have any interest in preserving it and would like to contribute. They could do an outreach to the neighbors. She also suggested that they could consider a long option and pay for it over time.

Ms. Taylor told the members that they should contact Tom Howe who is Senior Director of Land Protection of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. She said that he may be able to advise them.

BOARD'S ACTION-MINUTES:

MOTION: On a motion by N. Wederski, seconded by S. Rolfe, it was voted to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2008 meeting as written. (3-0) M. McLetchie abstained.

STONE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL:

Tracy Tarr, Cindy Balcus and Ann Daly were present from Stoney Ridge Environmental for the startup meeting for the Prime Wetlands Study they will be doing for the town. They showed the members a map from the National Wetlands Inventory of all wetland areas greater than 2 acres in size in the town of Belmont. There were 88 of them. They told the members they would limit the scope to 30 wetlands and use these as a starting base.

STAFF REPORT:

PLANNING BOARD MEETING:

R. Ball invited the members to attend the Planning Board meeting on Monday, June 9 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will include an overview of the second draft of the Earth Excavation Regulations for gravel pit operation.

BEAN DAM UPDATE:

Chairman Knowlton told the members that he has spoken with Mr. Locke. He reinforced the fact that the Conservation Commission is extremely interested in the property. They are concerned that it has been over a year since they started the process of acquiring it. M. McLetchie said that they should express to Mr. Locke that they are still interested in the property.

MOTION: On a motion by M. McLetchie, seconded by N. Wederski, the members voted to have the chairman send a letter to Mr. Locke indicating that the Commission is still interested in buying the Bean Dam property. (4-0)

OTHER BUSINESS:

TOWN FOREST:

M. McLetchie informed the members that the beavers are back in the town forest. He showed them a log that they had chewed on and said there has been a lot of activity from them.

S. Rolfe gave the members copies of the Accessibility Guidebook for Outdoor Recreation & Trails put out by USDA. It has a lot of information that will help them when working on the trail.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: On a motion by N. Wederski, seconded by S. Rolfe, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. (4-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Rollins

