

Belmont Conservation Commission 2006 Retreat Minutes

The Belmont Conservation Commission held a retreat on April 15, 2006 to conduct a planning meeting and walk town-owned conservation properties.

The meeting was held at vice chairperson Denise Naiva's home on Swallow Road, Belmont. The meeting began at 8:30AM. In attendance were Ken Knowlton, Denise Naiva, Mark Lewandoski, Nancy Wederski, Ginger Wells-Kay, Magnus McLetchie, and Scott Rolfe. Ward Peterson and Brian Watterson were absent.

After a warm-up exercise, the Commission engaged in a brain-storming session to create short and long-term goals. A consensus was reached and three top goals were chosen for the year:

- 1) The Town Forest: Completing the stewardship work that needs to be done on the Town Forest, including gates, trail map, handicap accessibility, dam repair, signage, trail clearing, and boundary marking.
- 2) The Harker Property: Completing tasks deemed necessary in the stewardship of this newly acquired conservation property, including boundary marking, trail blazes, signage, demarcating the parking area with boulders, and other tasks that become apparent.
- 3) Community Education and Communication: Increasing Belmont residents' knowledge of the Commission, its duties and interests and encouraging involvement in the conservation of our town's natural resources. Objectives may include developing a BCC annual newsletter; continuing the column in the Belmont Better Times; developing a "Friends of the Conservation Commission" made up of citizens interested in conservation and furthering the work of the BCC; improving and increasing communication between the BCC and other Town of Belmont boards and commissions; continuing to strengthen our relationship with our schools; and increasing communication and working on shared issues with Conservation Commissions in neighboring towns.

It was decided to table the planned work on updating the Conservation and Preservation section of the 2002 Master Plan. We agreed that it would be more accurate to revise the section after the Natural Resources Inventory is completed this year. It was also mentioned that the Land Use section in addition to the Conservation and Preservation section would need to be reviewed by the Commission.

We then addressed the need for active sub-committees in order to carry out the increasing workload of the Commission. It was decided that two committees would be formed and that the committees would meet at 6:00PM on the first Wednesday of each month, right before the 7:00PM monthly full commission meeting.

The two committees and members are:

Open Space Committee: Denise Naiva (Chairperson), Ken Knowlton, Mark Lewandowski, Magnus McLetchie, Nancy Wederski, and Scott Rolfe

The open space committee will carry out work pertaining to land acquisition and stewardship.

Education Committee: Ginger Wells-Kay (Chairperson), Ken Knowlton, and Scott Rolfe (ad hoc member)

The education committee will carry out work pertaining to conservation education in the community; school system liaison; BCC new commissioner training; and developing community support of conservation efforts put forth by the BCC.

After a lunch break, the Commissioners spent two hours walking the Belmont Town Forest. It is beautiful piece of land complete with beaver pond, stream, a towering stand of red pines, and well-built roads and paths. Time was spent reviewing the objectives that must be met this year in our stewardship of this property.

At 3:00PM, it was decided to walk the Harker property on another day as the retreat time had drawn to a close.

It was agreed that the retreat was productive and time well spent in the interest of Belmont's natural resources.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginger Wells-Kay