

## Conservation Commission

Wednesday, February 2, 2005

Corner Meeting House

Belmont, New Hampshire

Members Present: Chairman K. Knowlton, M. Lewandoski, N. Wederski,  
W. Peterson  
Members Absent: J. Peverly(e), D. Naiva(e)  
Alternates Present: G. Wells-Kay, M. McLetchie  
Staff: R. Ball, D. Rollins  
Others: Carol Foss

The chairman opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m. He appointed G. Wells-Kay as a voting member for tonight's meeting.

### **BOARD'S ACTION-MINUTES:**

**MOTION:** On a motion by M. Lewandoski, seconded by G. Wells-Kay it was voted to approve the minutes of the January 5, 2005 meeting as written. (4-0) W. Peterson abstained.

### **STAFF REPORT:**

### **NEW ALTERNATE MEMBER:**

R. Ball informed the members that he will draft a letter for the members to be given to the Board of Selectmen recommending Shari Colby for the alternate position.

### **NH DES WORKSHOP:**

The meeting with Gary Springs of NH DES regarding shoreland development has been rescheduled for Monday, February 14 at 6:00 p.m.

### **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PROGRAM:**

R. Ball and K. Knowlton met with Margaret Watson on Monday, January 31. They discussed the procedures used to obtain conservation easements.

**SCHOLARSHIPS:**

G. Wells-Kay met with Joanne Cormier of the Lakes Region Scholarship Foundation and they are willing to administer the scholarship for the Commission.

**MOTION:** On a motion by G. Wells-Kay, seconded by N. Wederski it was voted to have the Lakes Region Scholarship Foundation administer the Belmont Conservation Commission Scholarship. (5-0)

The money for the scholarship will be funded by donations. G. Wells-Kay gave the members copies of the application form that will be given to the students interested in receiving the scholarship. It was agreed that K. Knowlton, G. Wells-Kay and M. McLetchie will be on the committee to decide who will receive it.

**JORDAN INSTITUTE STRATEGIC FOCUS GRANT:**

Carol Foss of NH Audubon presented the members with an outline of their grant to study ways to integrate conservation practices with development in Belmont. It is titled: Balancing Development and Rural Character; New Strategies to Inform Land Use Decisions. The project goal is to work with town officials, local residents in Belmont, and others to identify a framework of options that the community can consider as part of an overall natural resource protection initiative during the next few years. The components will include a menu for best land use practices to assist in the preservation of significant wildlife habitat and habitat links and buffers, including voluntary practices, ordinances, and regulations. The background used comes from the Master Plan, the Open Space Zoning Ordinance and the Three Infrastructure Analysis. In the Master Plan four to eight visions are to maintain rural character. The Open Space Ordinance encourages most appropriate use of land conserving natural resources and preserving significant wildlife habitat and habitat links and buffers. The Three Infrastructure Analysis identified areas with priority natural resources, appropriate areas to expand village districts and areas of importance to the community's social fabric. It also showed areas of constraint and opportunity for balancing green, built and social infrastructures.

She then went on to describe what the grant is about. They will develop specific language for voluntary development practices and subdivision and site plan regulations to protect natural resources and wildlife habitat values and maintain rural character. She felt that the pre-application conference approach to meet with the developer is a very important part of the process.

One of the reasons why they are doing this is because growth is coming whether municipalities are prepared for it or not and many current land use regulations promote sprawl. Also municipalities can't buy enough land to protect community values. She then noted that new strategies can help balance growth and natural resource protection.

In Phase I they will develop strategies, identify topics, determine best practices/desired outcomes and develop languages. Phase II will be community outreach which will include planning staff review of draft and also town board and local developers review of draft.

The topics she presented were habitat connectivity, natural vegetation, significant wildlife habitat, recreation areas/trails, cultural features and road and building orientation. Habitat connectivity are routes that are safe for wildlife to travel within a home range and to and from breeding sites. Natural vegetation protects soil, protects water quality and reduces run-off, provides immediate homeowner benefits and reduces wildlife displacement. Significant wildlife habitat contributes to rural character, provides recreation opportunities, enhances quality of life and maintains ecological services. Recreation areas/trails promote health and fitness and enhance local economy. Cultural features contribute to rural character, maintain local history, provide esthetic benefits and contribute to uniqueness of place. Road and building orientation enhances winter road

safety, reduces road maintenance costs, contributes to rural character and reduces fuel deliveries.

Ms. Foss said that she will also be meeting with the Planning Board and Zoning Board members this month. She said she hopes to have something ready for review by June or July.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION:** On a motion by M. Lewandoski, seconded by N. Wederski, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:25 p.m. (5-0)

Respectfully submitted,

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Denise Rollins

