

Conservation Commission

Wednesday, October 19, 2005

Corner Meeting House

Belmont, New Hampshire

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

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 D. Naiva, seconded by G. Wells-Kay it was voted to approve the minutes of the October 5, 2005 meeting as written. (4-0) W. Peterson and B Watterson abstained.

Chairman Knowlton welcomed Scott Rolfe to the meeting. He was appointed as an Alternate to the Conservation Commission by the Board of Selectmen at their meeting on Monday, October 17.

CONSERVATION LAND ACQUISITION POLICY:

K. Knowlton said that R. Ball had mentioned that the Conservation Commission needs a mission statement as to their policy on land acquisition. It should be as short, clear and concise as possible. He said that the Commission is here to conserve lands and to protect water sources as stated in Article 2 of the Purpose and Intent from the Belmont Conservation Commission Rules of Procedure. D. Naiva felt that this should be their mission statement. It reflects what they are already attempting to do. K. Knowlton agreed. He said that it sums up why the Conservation Commission is acquiring land. It fulfills their purpose and intent. Also Article 2 Number 6 gives the Commission the authority to do so. It states "The Commission may acquire, in the name of the town and subject to approval of the Board of

Selectmen, by gift, purchase or otherwise the fee in such land or water rights, or any lesser interest as may be necessary to conserve and properly utilize open spaces and other land and water areas within the town, and shall manage and control the same.” D. Naiva said that they should outline the high priority areas, specifically the 3 areas that have already been identified. They also need to develop a method to transfer open space clusters to the town. The Johngis and Amily open spaces have specific qualities that are desirable. The BBE Realty open space doesn't meet community value so that area is less important. It was agreed that that this was not a property they should acquire. The Commission should go more for the cluster developments that give the property outright so everyone can use it. K. Knowlton told the members that they do need to show the public, the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen that they have a direction and what their goals are. They need to be able to explain what their mission is and why land acquisition is important to the town and how they are going to go about acquiring it. They need to include the types of acquisitions and the plan of how they will manage the property after it is acquired. M. McLetchie said they should establish long term goals. They need a method of rating the pieces of land which would include wildlife habitat, scenic, unique areas, productive forests and prime agricultural lands. S. Rolfe suggested the Conservation Commission make a basic broad goal that over the 25 year period they would help preserve and protect a certain percentage of land by either buying it or acquiring conservation easements. K. Knowlton said they could have a 25 year plan but should also start on immediate goals. G. Wells-Kay would like to see Belmont's open space connect with other towns. They could set up a line of communication with neighboring towns. G. Wells-Kay gave the members a copy of the Town of Milford's Land Acquisition & Management. The members agreed it is well thought out and could be used as a template for developing their policy. It addresses everything that the members have been discussing. After more discussion the members agreed to work from it and make changes to it.

OTHER BUSINESS:

NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY:

R. Ball told the members that Watershed to Wildlife, Inc. has responded to his letter and will be attending the December 7 meeting.

NH DOT LAND:

After reading an article in the NH Conservation Commission News W. Peterson suggested that the Commission try to acquire the eleven pieces of land held by the NH DOT. He said they should send a letter to the Board of Selectmen asking for their support.

MOTION: W. Peterson made a motion that the Conservation Commission try to obtain the DOT properties by sending a letter to the Board of Selectmen reflecting this. M. Lewandoski seconded it.

After discussing it further W. Peterson withdrew his motion. The members decided that because of some liability issues with some pieces they should each be looked at on an individual basis first.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: On a motion by D. Naiva, seconded by G. Wells-Kay, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:50 p.m. (6-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Rollins

