

Conservation Commission Meeting
Thursday, December 11th, 2008
7:00pm - Waitsfield Town Office

Members Present: Elizabeth Cadwell, Tom Gardner, Phil Huffman, Ted Joslin, Leo Laferriere, Chris Loomis, and Spencer Potter

Leo Laferriere called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

I. Public Input

There were no members of the public present.

II. Northfield Ridgeline Parcels:

A. Boundary Marking: Russ Barrett has offered to help mark boundaries and create a timber inventory for the property. He has a copy of the natural community inventory.

Action Item: Spencer Potter will send Russ a tax map to help with boundary marking.

Action Item: Leo Laferriere will convey to Russ that we accept his offer.

It was agreed that Russ may proceed with the project and does not need to appear before the Commission.

B. Easement: Chris, Leo, and Phil continue to work on the Easement with the Vermont Land Trust. Some revisions have been made. The Committee will touch base with the VLT and the donor in an attempt to finalize the wording.

Action Item: Phil will email the Commission an updated version.

Action Item: Elizabeth will deliver a copy to Paul.

C. Trail head parking: Ted Joslin reported that Gunner McCain has contacted Mr. Kisiel about flagging the parking area and trail head. The trail begins at the end of Bowen Road on the Kisiel footpath. Gunner plans to mark the trail location free of charge. Once the flags are in place, he will contact Leo and Charlie Hosford to walk the property with him.

Action Item: Ted Joslin will keep the Commission up to date on the progress.

D. Town Help in Establishing a Parking Area: Phil Huffman asked if the Town Road Crew could help with a log landing and/or in the creation of parking spaces. It was pointed out that the town may have made this one of the conditions when allowing development to occur on the Stankowinz property. Item #7 on the Kisiel Final Plan Review document states that six parking spaces are to be created in perpetuity on the lot for use by Scrag visitors. Are Public Parking spaces required on the Stankiewicz property as well?

Action Item: Chris Loomis will look at the Planning Commission's paperwork relating to the Stankiewicz property. Is there an actual requirement for Public Parking on this lot, or is it simply allowed for if needed?

III. Mad River Valley Biomass Project - Tara Hamilton:

There are plans underway to study the impact of having a pellet making facility in central Vermont. Persons across the State are working together to better understand the impact this type of facility might have on a rural Vermont community. Two focus areas have been chosen: the Mad River Valley and Addison County. Experts from various fields are working together to discern the pros and cons of such a facility. Currently, Harwood Union High School relies on Wood Pellets to provide heat for the school. Could these wood pellets be sourced locally?

Tara shared the current work of the group and asked for feedback from Conservation Commission Members. All agreed that while we are interested in learning about this project, we will need to know more about what it entails. Tara will keep the Commission informed as the project progresses.

IV. Wu Ledges Municipal Forest:

Spencer Potter created a new map of the Wu Ledges using Audrey Huffman's map overlaid with additional GIS maps. Although the Commission is one step closer to having an official map, it still is not entirely clear which trails are on town land and which cross over onto private property.

Leo Laferriere asked new Commission member Tom Gardner to research Hasting Meadows/Lawton ownership issues as they relate to the easement. Was there a fee simple conveyance made to the town?

Action Item: Tom Gardner will research ownership/ boundary issues and report back to the Commission at the next meeting.

IV. Status of Town's Restroom, Recreation, and Conservation Fund:

Leo Laferriere called Jen Peterson at the Town Office to check on the status of previously misallocated funds. Jen reported that the \$5000 donation is now carried in a separate Fund entitled the "Town Forest Conservation RE." Leo Laferriere commented that this item may be removed from the Agenda as it has been adequately resolved.

V. Vacancies on the Commission:

Tom Gardner graciously stepped up to fill one of the Commission vacancies, but there is still another position to be filled. This item will remain on the Agenda until further notice.

VI. October Minutes and Other Business:

A. Chris Loomis motioned to approve the Minutes from the last meeting. Spencer Potter seconded the motion, and all approved.

B. The Next Meeting is scheduled for **January 22nd, 2009** at 7pm.

C. Leo shared a "No ATV" sign that he found, and Spencer Potter added it to the Conservation Commission Folder for future use.

D. The Town's Design Review Board (DRB) decided that the Conservation Commission will not be put in charge of gravel pit lands for the time being.

E. Mark Grosby emailed the following quote from the Vermont Secretary of State's Office:

"Land can be donated to a municipality and acquired by action of the Legislative body for any of the purposes set out in 10 V.S.A. §6301. These purposes include to encourage and assist the maintenance of present uses of agricultural, forest, and other undeveloped land and to prevent the accelerated residential and commercial development;

to preserve scenic natural resources; to strengthen the base of the recreation industry and to increase employment, income, business, and investment; and to plan for orderly growth."

Mark thought this might be useful for the Commission to keep on file for future reference. Thank you, Mark...

The Meeting was adjourned by Leo Laferriere.