

Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, January 10, 2006

Attendance: Commission members Carol Haas, Mike Pulsifer, John Herrick, Mike Duddy, David Sterling, Jonah Rosenfield and Dick Bauman; Town Planner Maureen O'Meara.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm.
2. Minutes of December's meeting were accepted as written by a unanimous vote.
3. Outgoing Chairman John Herrick nominated Mike Pulsifer to become the new Commission Chairman. Mike accepted the nomination and was elected by a unanimous vote. John also nominated Dick Bauman to succeed Jonah Rosenfield as Secretary. Dick also accepted and was elected unanimously.
4. In the course of discussing Gull Crest trail work, the Cape Nordic Ski Club's trail development proposal was brought up. At the December 12 Town Council meeting, representatives of Cape Nordic presented their vision for a 2.5-kilometer ski trail utilizing portions of the 'outer loop' trail. The club would like to establish a 12' foot wide, relatively flat trail with gentle curves. It would be groomed as needed and reserved during the winter exclusively for cross country skiing.

After considerable discussion, Commission members identified several reasons for not supporting the ski trail proposal. The Greenbelt Plan and Gull Crest Master Plan makes clear that trails are for multiple uses. Precluding use by snowmobiles and other non-skiing users would not be in keeping with the Plans. Also, to meet the specifications of Cape Nordic, the trail would require removal of trees and other vegetation to accommodate its 12' width. The Greenbelt Plan states that trails are to be designed to have a minimal impact on the environment. The ski trail would also require significant changes to the existing grading, which could result in ongoing soil erosion problems.

Commission members also expressed concern about future costs to the Town for upkeep of the proposed trail and the limits of its usability as a ski trail given the lack of snow during many of Cape Elizabeth's winters. Commissioners expressed willingness to work with the Nordic Ski group to accommodate their needs on other town trails.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Commission decided to document its concerns in a memo to the Town Manager.

5. Two trail work projects were discussed. Plans were made for Boardwalk construction on the Fowler Road extension trail. The work is scheduled for February 4 with a 'rain date' alternative of February 11, at 9 am. Also,

movement of utility poles to the site of a boardwalk project on the outer loop trail at Gull Crest was tentatively set for March 4.

6. The Commission reviewed the Planning Board Agenda. Maureen updated the Commission on the current status of the Spurwink Woods development project. At December's meeting the Commission voted to recommend issuance of a Resource Development Permit for Spurwink Woods. The Commission reviewed the sewer rehab/pump station project and voted to support issuance of a Resource Protection Permt.
7. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25. The next meeting is scheduled for February 14.