

## Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, February 14, 2006

Attendance: Commission members Mike Pulsifer, Carol Haas, John Herrick, David Sterling, Jonah Rosenfield and Dick Bauman; Town Planner Maureen O’Meara. Jack Roberts and Peter Dunfey were also in attendance.

1. The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.
2. Minutes of January’s meeting were accepted as written by a unanimous vote.
3. **Correspondence.** The Nordic Ski memo to the Town Manager and his response was reviewed and commented on by various Commission members. The discussion concluded with members generally agreeing that no fundamental differences existed between our views and the Manager’s and that further correspondence on the matter was not warranted at this time.

In response to previous inquires concerning the “Golden Ridge” easement, Maureen provided members with copies of a letter to the Town Manager from the law firm of Ainsworth, Thelin, Chamberlain & Raftice stating that an easement deed had been recorded on December 30, 2005.

4. **Gull Crest Trails Implementation.** Several Commission members commented on how much was accomplished at the Fowler Road Connector work site on February 4 and 11. On the fourth, all of the railroad ties and 2 by lumber was moved from near the roadside down to the jobsite, the ties were laid down, most of the boardwalk support ‘boxes’ were constructed and several sections of decking nailed in place. A great turnout of more than twenty volunteers and commission members participated. Two tractors and an ATV/cart were also contributed to the effort. Several pictures were taken that will likely appear in local newspapers.

On the following Saturday, a small group of Commission members and volunteers finished construction of the boardwalk support boxes and nailed a significant portion of the remaining decking in place.

A final workday to complete the Connector boardwalk was discussed and scheduled for March 11. In the meantime, Public Works will be asked to cut the remaining lumber into 6 foot lengths.

A future project on the outer loop trail for which telephone polls have been obtained was discussed briefly. Jack Roberts suggested leaving the poles in one piece and having Public Works transport them to Charlie Webber’s property. They could then be skidded to the job site and laid down parallel to the trail line. The suggestion was accepted and Maureen will follow up with Bob Malley.

5. **Trails Day 2006 (June 3).** The subject of potential Trail Day events was discussed and the members decided to use the occasion as a work day. One project, suggested by Carol, is repair of the Stonegate trail bridges. After members agreed, Carol said she would recruit volunteers and provide Maureen with a materials list.

Another project selected as a Trails Day event is the Gull Crest outer loop project. The hope is that the site will be dry enough by June to allow the work to be done. Whenever it is accomplished, the work will be credited towards the 'in kind' requirement of the Gull Crest development grant.

A final suggestion concerned construction of a kiosk and signage at one or more of the major entrances to the Gull Crest trail system. This idea will be given further consideration at future meetings.

6. **Winnick Woods Habitat grant.** Maureen reviewed for the Commission email correspondence concerning approval of a grant request made by staff of the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge to design plans for preserving New England cottontail habitat on Wildlife Refuge property adjacent to Winnick Woods. She also reviewed the Town Manager's email response to the grant approval news. He is recommending the matter be referred to the Town Council's Ordinance Committee. They would consider suggestions from interested parties as to what action, if any, the Town should take and make a recommendation to the full Council. Reflecting the Council's concerns about restricting use of Winnick Woods property, the Manager suggests working with Rachel Carson staff to preserve cotton tail habitat but not sign any formal agreements.
7. **Planning Board Meeting.** Two Town of Cape Elizabeth applications requiring Resource Protection Permits were reviewed. The first application is for the rerouting a drainage pipe in the Elizabeth Park/Brentwood neighborhood from Longfellow Drive to school property and the Spurwink Marsh. The other application covers construction of two new dugouts and a storage shed adjacent to lower Lions Field. Two existing dugouts would be removed. The Commission unanimously recommended approval of both Permits by the Planning Board.
8. John Herrick informed the Commission about his recent attendance at a South Portland Conservation Commission meeting. He noted that South Portland's Commission, unlike ours, does not have a City staff person assigned to them and how much of an advantage it is to have Maureen working with us. He also expressed the idea that that future visits to Scarborough and South Portland's Commissions would be helpful to all of us and volunteered to take on liaison responsibilities. The Commission enthusiastically accepted his offer.

9. The subject of training for Commission members was brought up. After discussing various ideas, members decided that a session on wetlands would be most helpful. The training would provide information about the biological characteristics and significance of wetlands and review Town ordinances applicable to wetlands in Resource Protection Districts.

The Commission plans to hold the session on Tuesday, April 11th from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. David Rocque, State Soils Scientist, will be invited to present the science and Maureen will review the Town's wetland regulations. Considering the general interest and value of the material being presented, the Commission will open the session to others, with special invitations to the Town Council and Planning Board.

10. At the next meeting, scheduled for March 14, the Nordic Ski Trail proposal will be on the agenda. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10.