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Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, August 8, 2006

Attendance: Commission members Mike Pulsifer, Carol Haas, John Herrick, David Sterling, Mike Duddy and Dick Bauman; Town Planner Maureen O'Meara. Barry Hansen also attended to discuss geocaching.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pulsifer at 7:04.
2. By unanimous vote, the Commission accepted the June meeting minutes as written.
3. **Correspondence:**
 - Commission members were provided with a copy of the Planning Board letter approving a Resource Protection Permit for trail crossings on RP2 wetlands in the Winnick Woods property. The Permit will expire on July 19th 2007 if construction is not started by that date.
 - Maureen supplied documentation of expenses to date for materials used to construct trails in the Gull Crest parcel. These material costs (and the value of associated labor) are grant-eligible expenditures.
 - Maureen also informed the Commission of the current 'carryover' balance in the Greenbelt Trail Improvements account.
 - For information purposes, the Commission reviewed an email from Paul A. Willette to Maureen concerning work being done by the Fish and Wildlife Service in the Scarborough portion of the Spurwink Marsh.
4. **Great Pond Easement and Boat Storage Rules.** Earlier in the day, Maureen, Dan Bolander, who is an employee of Oest Associates and John Greene, representing the Sprague Corporation, made a Great Pond site visit to obtain the geographic data required for the legal description that will accompany the new easement. The work was not completed because vegetation obscured the location of boundary markers and there were problems obtaining GPS coordinates. Another attempt will be made in the fall, when the leaves are gone.

Maureen counted thirty one boats currently stored in or near the new easement. This information led to a discussion of the 20 boat limit written into the proposed boat storage rules. A general consensus was reached that storage of more than 20 boats should be allowed. A thirty or thirty five boat limit was suggested. The prohibition on storage of boats exceeding 18' was also reconsidered and a 20' foot limit found to be more reasonable. Finally, a suggestion was made to make sure that boat rule wording made clear that permits would be required for boat storage, not day use of the Pond.

The Commission voted unanimously to table consideration of final boat storage rules until the easement is ready for approval.
5. **Geocaching.** Barry Hansen, a resident of the Cross Hill neighborhood attended to support his request for permission to place items known as geocaches in inconspicuous locations on Town property, at Cross Hill and other Greenbelt trails in particular. Barry had previously written a letter to the Commission, containing a great deal of information about geocaching in general and what he wanted to do to further the sport in Cape Elizabeth. (In his letter, Barry describes geocaching as an activity that involves use of GPS devices to find containers (caches) placed by other geocachers who publish the

location latitude and longitude coordinates on a website.) He provided additional details in his oral presentation and responded to a number of questions raised by Commission members.

After further discussion and deciding that geocaching activities on Greenbelt trails would not have an adverse impact, the Commission voted to recommend that geocachers not be required to obtain Town approval for placement of geocaches on the Greenbelt. The Commission did suggest that the Town require that the Police Department be notified of geocaching placements in the event that a geocache is found by someone who, not knowing what it is, reports it to the Police.

6. Trail Improvement needs.

- Carol provided the Commission with pictures of the two Stonegate Trail bridges that need rebuilding and suggested ways of accomplishing the work, prepared by Dan Chase. After reviewing and discussing the pictures and Dan's information at length, the Commission determined that a site visit was in order. Accordingly, Commission members will meet on Saturday, August 19th at 9:00 a.m. at the Dyer Pond Road entrance (near Shore Road) to the Stonegate Trail system and proceed to the site.
- Mike Pulsifer reported that he recently walked the Two Lights Trail in response to an email from David Sherman. Mike confirmed that the trail is overgrown in spots as Mr. Sherman stated. Maureen will ask Public Works if they will clear the trail with bushwhacking equipment.
- Mike Duddy discussed the need for work on a Great Pond Trail bridge that has been vandalized. Replacement treads are needed for those burnt and otherwise damaged by vandals and the bridge structure has to be reset. Mike will let Commission members know when he is ready lead a work party. It was also suggested that pictures and a story about the vandalism be written for publication in the Cape Courier.
- An email from Bill Goodykoontz concerning conditions on the Cross Hill trails was discussed, particularly his comments concerning damage caused by mountain bikers. Dick expressed his belief that bikes are in fact causing significant trail damage especially in wet areas and areas that are covered only by a thin soil layer over ledge. Mike Duddy pointed out that this spring was very wet and a great deal of the damage was done during that time. Mike volunteered to discuss the situation with local bike shop owners. He will ask that owners talk to riders they know about staying off the trails during a period in the spring when the trails are at their wettest. If that does not relieve the problem, the Commission may have to consider recommending a Town imposed restriction on use of the trail by bike riders during the wet season. Also, Dick and Mike Duddy will work with Tom Brady to initiate previously planned Cross Hill trail projects.

7. Carol informed the Commission that she has completed distribution of the purple loosestrife eating beetles supplied by the Rachael Carson National Wildlife Refuge office in Wells. As in previous years, the beetles were placed in areas having significant stands of loosestrife. Apparently, previous beetle placements have been effective, because some of these stands no longer exist. As a consequence, she had beetles left over which were placed at smaller stands. To prepare for next year's beetle distribution, Maureen will ask the Police to once again identify areas where loosestrife is growing profusely.

8. **Planning Board.** Maureen explained the current status of the Resource Protection Permit application that would allow construction of a driveway across type 2 wetlands to a parcel off Hannaford Cove Road. The matter is on the agenda of the Planning Board's meeting of August 15th.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15. The next regular Conservation Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 12, 2006. One item on the agenda will be previously postponed work on the outerloop trail in Gull Crest.