

Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, September 12, 2006

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

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pulsifer at 7:03.
2. By unanimous vote, the Commission accepted the August meeting minutes as written.
3. **Correspondence:**
 - A Copy of the Chairman's letter to the Town Manager explaining the Commission's recommendations relating to placement of geocaches on Town property was distributed to Commission members.
 - An email from Kate O'Brien, a Refuge Biologist on the staff of the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, was reviewed. Among other subjects, Ms. O'Brien's message stated that no evidence of habitation by the New England Cottontail has been found in the Winnick Woods area to date. After discussion, the Commission decided that before recommending further action to the Town Board, a site visit, attended by Rachel Carson staff, was in order. Accordingly, Maureen will contact Ms. O'Brien to arrange a visit so that Commission members can become better informed about current conditions in the proposed habitat area and discuss what actions would be required to maintain it for the Cottontail.

Ms. O'Brien's email also mentioned that the State is considering an endangered species designation for New England Cottontails. Maureen will attempt to obtain more information about the State's plans.
 - For information purposes, the latest Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge *Conservation Planning Update* was distributed to Commission members.
 - Also distributed for information purposes was the July 2006 issue of the American Planning Association's *Zoning Practice* publication, which was devoted to the subject of tree preservation at the local government level. In response to a question, Maureen briefly reviewed the Town's Zoning regulations on the subject.
 - Copies of the final Winnick Woods Master were distributed.
 - Responding to an email from Maureen, Nicholas Quatrano indicated that he plans to do his Eagle Scout project work on September 30 and October 1st. Nick will be constructing a 'foot bridge' over a small stream on the Vernon Road to Great Pond trail. Randall Hobbs has not as yet indicated when he plans to initiate his boardwalk construction project in Winnick Woods. Jonah will follow up with Randall.
4. **Trail Improvement needs.**
 - Stonegate bridges. On Saturday, August 19th several Commission members examined the Stonegate trail bridges that need repair or replacement to consider how the work should be done. After further discussion at the Commission meeting, it was decided that two bridges should be replaced using box beams

currently stored in the Public Works yard. Public Works employees will be asked to cut the beams to length and drill holes to allow attachment of lumber 'nailers'.

- Gull Crest floating boardwalk. At a previous meeting, Maureen was asked to obtain information about floating dock systems from area suppliers. Use of such a system was suggested as way of bridging a wide expanse of flowing water that cross the outer loop trail route. Maureen's first supplier contact was *Great Northern Docks*. She provided cost estimates, specifications and other information obtained from that source in a memo to the Commission. Maureen is awaiting similar information from *Custom Float Systems*.

The Commission was generally encouraged by what has been learned so far and expressed a strong preference for a system that could stay in place throughout the year.

5. **Planning Board.** No items requiring review by Conservation Commission are on the Planning Board's agenda at this time.

The Commission was shown a copy of the engineering plan for phase 1 of the Gull Crest Nordic ski trail prepared by Oest Associates.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00. The next regular Conservation Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 10, 2006.