

## Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, June 12, 2007

Attendance: Commission members, Mike Pulsifer, Mike Duddy, Carol Haas, new member John Planinsek and Dick Bauman; Town Planner Maureen O'Meara. Ted Darling and Kathleen Janick, representing the Cape Elizabeth Land Trust also attended.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. The Commission welcomed newly appointed member John Planinsek, noting how much time and effort he devotes to trail maintenance activities on his own.
2. The May meeting minutes were approved without change.
3. **Correspondence.** Maureen reported on an invitation she has extended to South Portland and State officials to meet for the purpose of developing a Trout Brook Watershed management plan. The Watershed has been designated as 'Urban Impaired' in that its water flows do not meet State quality standards. The objective is to create a plan that will result in improved water quality without seriously disrupting either municipality's existing land use planning goals. Although no Commission members will be available to attend the initial meeting scheduled for June 21, the Chairman expressed the Commission's interest and asked Maureen to keep us informed.

#### 4. **Winnick Woods Master Plan Implementation.**

- Several members of the Commission who attended the Winnick Woods trail day event reported on what was accomplished. All five boardwalks needed to cross the stream and wet areas on the main trail were constructed. That amount of building in one day is considered to be a new record. The trail was also cleared and signed from the parking lot all the way to the Land Trust property. Approximately 20 people turned out including some from the neighborhood, others who have participated in previous trail work events, and most Commission members. The Land Trust's help in publicizing the event was acknowledged with gratitude.

Mike Duddy discussed some of the remaining work including additional clearing on the main trail, rebuilding the garden shed for use as an information kiosk, installing a large sign near the garden shed, finishing the parking lot and creating a return trail that loops back to main trail from the Land Trust property. The garden shed's stone pillars have been righted and anchored in place by Public Works.

- Maureen provided a sample of the map that will be displayed in the garden shed. Commission members were impressed with its size and level of detail but noted that the sample did not show connections between Winnick Woods' trails and those in the Dyer – Hutchinson parcel and Cross Hill. Maureen will need geographic data from the Land Trust in order to include Winnick Woods

- Dyer Hutchinson trail connections. The routes of all Winnick Woods' trails that are to appear on a final version of the map will also have to be established and, in the future, added to the Town's geographic information database.

## **5. Post Storm Trail Cleanup.**

- At the last meeting, Chairman Pulsifer asked various Commission members to determine if any trees or branches downed by April's nor'easter are still blocking greenbelt trails. Carol and John reported that Stonegate/Dyer Pond trails have been cleared; Mike Pulsifer reported the Broadcove trail is almost completely cleared and he will finish the work; Mike also reported that additional cleanup may be needed in Gull Crest, near the floating boardwalk; Dick reported two trees down on Cross Hill trails one of which is not impeding trail use. At the last meeting Mike Duddy reported he had cleared the Great Pond trail.
- Maureen distributed a memo summarizing her ideas and recent actions on the subject of tree removal on Town open space. After reviewing the memo, Commission members agreed with her that downed trees not blocking or likely to block trails should not be removed by the Town. Also, downed trees and dead trees not yet fallen should, in general, be left in place but, adjacent home owners may be given permission to remove them on a case by case basis.

**6. Bond Issue Projects.** Maureen reported that the Town's 2007 – 08 budget will make available \$150,000 of bond funds for greenbelt projects. Further, the Town Council will be looking for suggestions from the Conservation Commission as to the projects that should be funded. It was clear from the resulting discussion that acquiring a permanent replacement for the Alewives Creek boardwalk continues to be the Commission's first choice. After further suggestions were made and discussed, the Chairman's requested that members think further about the subject and bring their ideas the July meeting.

**7. Village Crossing Trail Connection.** Dick reported that he and Dena met with David Rogers of the Village Crossing assisted living facility to discuss signage related to the parking and trail access that is being provided by Village Crossing. Mr. Rogers agreed to the installation of a greenbelt information sign on Scott Dyer Road, a sign directing drivers to the appropriate parking lot, signs identifying spaces for trail users and a sign on the trail connection itself. He also offered to have his landscape contractor install the finished signs.

Mr. Rogers will be given an opportunity to review and approve sign wording and design prior to production.

**8. Gull Crest Floating Boardwalk.** Maureen reported that the floating boardwalk is now in place and encouraged those who have not seen it to take a look. She

thanked Mike Duddy for working with the *Custom Float Systems* installers to insure the boardwalk was installed in the right place.

- 9. Planning Board Meeting.** No items on the Planning Board's agenda require consideration by the Conservation Commission. For information purposes, Maureen discussed a proposed amendment the Cross Hill subdivision that would create two lots from what is now one, known as Lot 1. One of the lots would be deeded to the Town as open space.

It was also noted that a lawyer representing Ms. Maskewitz and Mr. McMullin will discuss their Resource Protection Permit application at our July meeting.

- 10. Monthly Trail Walk.** Commission members will, on an individual basis, walk the Gull Crest outer loop trail to examine the new floating boardwalk.

**11. Other Business.**

- Copies of emails between Chris Franklin of the Land Trust and members of the mountain biking community had been sent to Commission members prior to the meeting. These emails and the one from Bill Goodykoontz, referring to trail damage caused by mountain bikers, prompted a discussion of the problem. At Cross Hill, the damage is primarily the result of bikers riding on wet ground. Further damage occurs when riders create new trails attempting to bypass muddy areas caused by previous riders. Trailblazing and unauthorized 'bridge' building at Winnick Woods and Dyer – Hutchinson was also mentioned as were reports of trespassing on private property.

It appears that members of the mountain biker community are aware and concerned about what is happening and want to address the problem so that a restriction on their trail use does not become necessary. Chris is attempting to schedule a meeting with interested mountain bikers to develop a plan of action. Maureen will work with Chris and keep the Commission informed.

- Maureen reported that the Golden Ridge 'private property - no trespassing sign' has or soon will be removed as requested by the Conservation Commission.
- Maureen reported that Rachel Carson Wildlife Refuge staff is working on an agreement between the Town and the Fish and Wildlife Service that would establish and protect New England Cottontail habitat. The expectation is that the agreement will serve as a model for similar arrangements between other local governments and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

**12.** The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 10, 2007.