

## Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 13, 2007

Attendance: Commission members Mike Pulsifer, Dena DeSena, Mike Duddy, Carole Haas, John Herrick, John Planinsek and Dick Bauman; Town Planner Maureen O'Meara. Steve Ballou attended on behalf of the Land Trust.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.
2. October's meeting minutes were approved without change.
3. **Correspondence.** In a memo, the Town Manager asked for the Commission's opinion concerning the environmental value of a 2.7 acre lot the owners want to donate to the Town. The lot is located on the Trout Brook at the South Portland municipal line. Maureen noted that the lot cannot be developed because it is an RP1 wetland. The lot also lacks road frontage. Consequently, its assessed value is \$1,400 and the owners currently pay less than \$50 a year in property taxes.

After discussion, the Commission voted unanimously to inform the Manager that it considers the lot to have environmental value warranting its protection from any alteration. Maureen will prepare a written response to the Manager expressing the Commission's viewpoint.

4. **Priority Setting.** Prior to the meeting, Commission members were provided with a draft compilation of the projects and purchases that may be proposed for bond funding. After the listed items were thoroughly discussed, the Commission established a framework for its proposal as described below:
  - Four individual Great Pond projects were grouped into one major trail improvement initiative that would receives most of the available funds. The rational for this element of the proposal is Great Pond's status as one of the Town's premier natural assets and the very unsatisfactory condition of its trail. The Great Pond initiative would be designated as the Commission's first priority.
  - Standardized location and identification signage would be placed at all trail heads, intersections and other important locations throughout the greenbelt system. Presently, there is almost no signage beyond a limited number of "G" trail route signs. Signage improvement is the Commission's next highest priority.
  - Equipment and tools needed to for trail maintenance projects in remote locations would be purchased, along with a storage shed. Whenever equipment and an operator cannot be hired,

Commission members must hand carry heavy materials for long distances or forego certain projects entirely. Also, because the Commission does not have tools of its own, members must use their personal tools or borrow tools to perform trail work.

- The final proposed project would be a major upgrade of the Gull Crest outer loop trail. Where needed, fill materials would be laid down and obstructions removed in order to establish a firm, level surface to make the trail usable and safe for persons with limited mobility.

Additional information is needed to complete the proposal which Maureen was asked to obtain and incorporate in a final draft that the Commission will vote on in December.

**5. MEACC Discussion.** John attended the October 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Maine Association of Conservation Commissions. He gave a verbal report of the proceedings and distributed copies of his meeting notes. Representatives from the 11 Commissions attending briefly described their functions, which vary widely from town to town. Executive Director Bob Shafto then talked about MEACC's goals and proposed activities. Finally, the attendees formed smaller groups to develop ideas about how the organization can help its members with local activities as well as regional and State issues.

**6. Staff Report.** Maureen presented the following items for the Commission's information and discussion.

- As previously requested, five post-mounted signs, a wall sign and a large trailhead sign have been ordered. The trailhead sign will be located adjacent to the Winnick Woods parking area. The wall sign will display a Winnick Woods trail map be mounted on a rebuilt potting shed. One of the post-mounted signs will also be located in Winnick Woods. The remaining signs will be placed at entrances to other trails around Town.
- A draft letter of appreciation from the Commission to Public Works Director Malley and his staff was reviewed and approved.
- A draft letter from the Commission to the Fort Williams Advisory Commission was reviewed and approved. The letter asks the Advisory Commission to consider installing a gate and greenbelt sign on the Fort's Shore Road frontage, across from an entrance to a greenbelt trail. The gate would be paid for by the Conservation Commission, which wants to provide people using Fort Williams' trails with ready access to the greenbelt trails in that area.

- Skip Murray's quote for spreading gravel over the geotextile fabric adjacent to the outer loop floating boardwalk at Gull Crest was reviewed. After discussion, the Commission decided that an additional layer of fabric, topped by wood chips was in order and asked Maureen to obtain a revised quote from Skip.
- A draft list of fiscal year 2008 projects, with estimated costs, was reviewed. The list includes two Gull Crest trail projects, one of which, when completed, will satisfy the Town's obligation under terms of the RTP grant. Also on the list is construction of another bridge on the trail system at Stonegate.

After discussing other potential projects, the Commission added three more to the list. One would rebuild the potting shed at Winnick Woods and extend the parking area to accommodate more users than was originally anticipated. The second involves construction of boardwalks on trails in the Town's newly acquired Loveitt Heirs parcel. The Conservation Commission authorized up to \$2,000 to purchase materials for the Loveitt parcel improvements. The final addition would be to clear and mark the Spurwink Marsh trail.

7. **Planning Board Meeting.** No items of concern to the Commission are on the Planning Board's November 26<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda.
8. **Monthly Trail Walk.** On November 18<sup>th</sup>, at 9 a.m., Commission members will clean up the potting shed site at Winnick Woods in preparation for shed reconstruction work, which will take place on December 1 at 8:30. Mike Duddy was asked to submit a materials list for the required lumber to Maureen.
9. The meeting was adjourned at 9:22. The next meeting is scheduled for December 11<sup>th</sup>.