

Conservation Commission Minutes

January 10, 2012

Present: John Planinsek, Zach Matzkin, Garvan Donegan, Richard Bauman, Marti Blair, Town Planner Maureen O'Meara

Guest: Skip Murray

Meeting called to order at 7:04 p.m.

1. Election of Officers.

Chairperson: Garvan Donegan

Secretary: Marti Blair

2. Citizen Comments. None.

3. Minutes of October 11, 2011 and December 13, 2011 were reviewed and unanimously approved.

4. Correspondence. 2012 meeting schedule was revised and approved. The Commission will not meet in February but will meet on Tuesday, January 24.

5. Trail maintenance review/plan. At the last meeting the Commission authorized spending \$5000 on improvements to the outer loop of the Gull Crest trail. Since that meeting, it has become clear that this project may be more expensive than anticipated.

Skip Murray has done some contracting work on Cape's trails, lives near Gull Crest, and also is a snowmobiler. At this point, Great Pond is what's left for snowmobiling in Cape. In his opinion it is not worth it to build a bridge or boardwalk that can be used by snowmobilers. They will ruin any boardwalk or bridging. The snowmobilers will go around, not over. Take the highest ground and use it for the trail. When the ground is frozen, the snowmobilers can go anywhere.

The loop area east of the floating bridge is very wet, 750 feet of bridging is needed. About 300 boards 8 feet long by 6 inches wide by 3 inches thick would be needed, at \$8.50 each. Red Mill Lumber could provide the lumber, with free delivery, with a couple of weeks notice. Skip Murray could bring the lumber in from his pit area and stage it at that end, which will avoid damage to the rest of the trail and the plastic bridge. Rough cut hemlock lumber would be used, two parallel planks nailed into two four-by-fours, close enough together so that mountain bikes can use them. This is called a bog bridge with sleepers. The "sleepers" should be pressure treated. It becomes like a floating trail. A four wheeler can get the boards out there, in the winter is the perfect time.

This bridging plan is consistent with the Gull Crest Trail Master Plan.

The town does have procedures for going out to bid when the cost of a project exceeds a certain amount. When there is a unique situation, the Town Manager can approve a sole source. The last time we went out to bid on Gull Crest, Skip Murray was the low bidder.

Motion: To request Skip Murray to give the Commission a proposal for improvements to the outer loop of the Gull Crest Trail, including purchasing the lumber, hauling it into place, and constructing the bog bridges, and spreading gravel.

Passed 5-0

The Town Planner met with Lisa Moulton and was told that a group of riders have made signs that would show which portion of trails would not be open to horses. This would be a safety precaution to keep riders off unsafe trails. Representatives of the horseback riders group will be invited to attend the next meeting.

There was discussion about providing an alternate horse trail at Gull Crest to avoid the damage that horses do to wet ground. Posting information about horses having the right-of-way could also be useful.

6. Great Pond Boat Racks 2011 season report. The Town Planner prepared a report for review. The Commission should probably make a report to the Council. There were some changes this year, including using a lottery system and putting it under management of the Town Planner, who made periodic inspection of the racks during the summer.

In 2011, 32 of the 40 people who entered the lottery got permits, so 8 people were disappointed in that process. In addition, approximately 5 people who came in during the summer requesting permits were denied. There were 4 people who received permits but apparently did not store a boat. The Planner recommends that those people be put at the end of the queue. Also, the spare slots should not be used by canoes because they don't fit. People who do not live in Cape Elizabeth or who do not own property here are not eligible to apply for a permit.

There was some limited vandalism. The permit system made it possible for boats to be identified and owners notified. No boats were left after the season ended.

Motion: To request the Town Planner to modify the draft report on the 2011 Great Pond Boat Racks, including recommendations, and submit it to the Town Council on behalf of the Conservation Commission.

Passed 5-0

7. Planning Board Review. The Conservation Commission is taking no action on items currently before the Planning Board.

8. Training Session. The Commission may set aside time for member training. Possibilities include bringing in experts to talk about items like wetlands, or having a review of town ordinances. It was suggested that we invite an expert to discuss the basics of trail-building appropriate to the conditions of Cape Elizabeth. It was also suggested that we ask the Town Planner for a briefing on the interpretation of the ordinance regarding set aside of land from

developers. The March meeting was suggested as an appropriate timeframe for inviting trail construction experts, with pizza at 6:30.

9. Monthly Trail Walk. Meet at Skip Murray's house on Grover Road on Thursday, January 12 at 8:00 a.m. to inspect the outer loop of the Gull Crest Trail.

10. Goal setting for 2012. At the April meeting we will have a general goal-setting discussion. It may be time for us to review, revise, and/or modify the Greenbelt Master Plan, which was developed in 2000. We also need to complete our maintenance plan for 2012, with priorities.

11. Commendation letter to Brendan Sweeney. The Commission approved the letter drafted by the Town Planner. The Planner reported that the Commission contributed to a gift certificate for Mr. Sweeney.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45p.m.

Next meeting: January 24, 2012