

Conservation Commission Minutes

July 10, 2012

Present: Garvan Donegan, Richard Bauman, John Marchewka, Zach Matzkin, John Planinsek, Mitch Wacksman, Marti Blair, Town Council Liaison Jessica Sullivan, Town Planner Maureen O'Meara

Meeting called to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. Citizen Comments. None.
2. Minutes of June 12, 2012 were reviewed and unanimously approved.
3. Correspondence. None.
4. Future Open Space Preservation Committee. FOSP was established by the Council to address the issue of open space preservation versus development.

A cost-benefit analysis found that because there is excess capacity in the school system and other town facilities, purchasing land to set aside for preservation is not cost effective. This does not mean that preservation of open space is still not a goal for other reasons. A telephone survey found little support among citizens for a bond to purchase land. FOSP at first intended to create a list of parcels identified for purchase and preservation, but that endeavor was not met with favor.

FOSP member Dick Bauman reported that FOSP is now recommending that the Conservation Commission be given responsibility for managing the Town's open space program. He advised the FOSP Committee that the Conservation Commission is primarily focused on trails and is occupied with its current duties, however the recommendation was adopted. He suggested that the Conservation Commission may need a larger membership if it takes on this role.

The Cape Elizabeth Land Trust does something very similar, but as a private organization they are not required to offer public access to their decision making. Presumably if the Land Trust was requesting town money for purchasing open space, under the proposed recommendation, that request would be referred to the Conservation Commission.

Written criteria would need to be developed for consideration of land to purchase. The Commission would make recommendations to the Town Council. This would also create a mechanism for consideration of parcels offered to the town or identified by other means. There is currently no money available for purchase of land.

There was discussion of whether it is a good idea to generate a list in advance of properties to be preserved. Rather, we should establish conditions under which land could come to the Commission for consideration. Already, the Greenbelt Plan is referred to when the town is considering open space preservation. The town has been very successful in acquiring land

through development plan review. The Conservation Commission noted that they have performed most of these tasks on an ad hoc basis in the past. Several members commented that the Conservation Commission is the appropriate group to take on this responsibility.

Motion: The Conservation Commission is agreeable to taking on the responsibility for open space evaluation and preservation recommendations, but would like to develop its own program for doing so, to be submitted to the Town Council for approval.

Passed unanimously.

The Conservation Commission will attend the FOSP meeting on September 26 at 7:00 p.m.

5. Trail needs assessments for FY 2013 budget year.

Dyer Woods Trails.

Motion: To authorize a survey of the Cliff Ave. access to the Dyer Woods parcel, for a cost not to exceed \$1000.

Passed unanimously.

Spurwink Marsh Trail. Add gravel to 200 feet of trail surface. A local permit will be required, possibly a state permit will be required. The Planner will investigate further.

Fowler Road Connector Improvements. Public Works will be installing a four foot wide path.

Two Lights Boardwalk. The Boy Scout chose another project.

Whaleback Trail.

Motion: To authorize New England Mountain Bike Association to build a standard boardwalk at Whaleback Trail, utilizing their grant money.

Winnick Woods. There was discussion of NEMBA building a boardwalk in Winnick Woods near the power line.

6. Trail closures. NEMBA does not want to be the decision-making entity for trail closures but will provide links on their website. Signage will be discussed.

7. Monthly trail walk. Two Lights Trail, August 14 at 5:30 p.m. Meeting place is at the trailhead between 72 and 76 Two Lights Rd.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Next meeting: September 11, 2012.

