

Morristown Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
November 30, 2006

Members Present: Gert Lepine, Steve Rae, Kevin Lane, Amy Walker, Jim Pease

Members Absent: None

Steve called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

The first item on the agenda was the review of the October 2006 minutes. However, since Kevin forgot the minutes this item will be added to the December 2006 meeting's agenda.

Then came the report from the co-chair, with Gert offering the following:

- Having heard that Esther Greaves may be considering conserving some land, Gert contacted Esther, who indicated that she has no such plans at this time.
- She also contacted Marble Realty to remind them that the commission continues to be interested in preserving the Kenfield Brook buffer along the LeFevre land.

Steve reported the following:

- He had received a letter from the VT Agency of Natural Resources informing the Commission that a Morristown landowner was granted "after the fact" permission from the state for construction along a wetland buffer. Following discussion, Jim volunteered to follow-up with State authorities to learn more about the circumstances of the event.
- He received an email from Ron Stancliff suggesting that the town no longer accept (maintenance) responsibility for roads created by new subdivisions. Following discussion, it was decided that Steve would contact Ron and suggest that he work with the Planning Commission (PC) on this item.
- He received an email from John Meyer, Planning Commission, seeking contact information for Amy so that he could follow-up on suggestions she offered at a recent Planning Commission meeting.

Next the Commission reviewed and discussed the Annual Report that Jim had drafted. Steve will incorporate the suggestions into Jim's draft and forward that to Amy for conversion to Microsoft Word (if necessary).

Then, the Commission discussed the Town Plan Update process. Steve, Amy, and Kevin have attended many of the PC's recent meetings on this item, and noted the following:

- Schedule - The schedule for addressing various aspects of the plan has Land Use toward the very end of the schedule. Therefore, if there is any slippage in schedule, Land Use may not be given adequate consideration.
- Vision - A goal of a recent meeting was development of a "vision" (which would provide overarching or guiding principals) for the Plan's development.

After discussion (at this meeting), it appears that the PC is willing to let the plan define the vision (rather than having the vision shape the plan).

- Level of Participation – At the Town Plan Update “kick-off” meeting (August 2006), the PC and Select Board both expressed great interest in having the Town Plan be informed by very great deal of citizen input. The meeting on “vision” (among the most critical of all meetings) was attended only by members of the PC and Conservation Commission.
- Current Plan – The current plan is very ambiguous (often establishing contradictory goals) and discusses in great detail “how we got to the present” but does not discuss the future.

Suggestions for addressing these issues included:

- Joint Meeting - Seeing if there is interest in a meeting involving the Select Board, PC, MCC, and DRB to address the plan and related issues.
- Survey - One way in which a high-volume of citizen input could be obtained (and analyzed) is via survey.
- Education – Perhaps a series of articles in the News & Citizen would help inform townspeople and bolster participation.

For “old business”, Jim reported:

- The soils of the Community Garden will be tested to see if there are any harmful residues from the industries previously located at this site.
- The Young Farm has received a report from NRCS detailing how they may correct the drainage problem (which results in contamination of the Kenfield Brook).

For “new business”, Amy reported:

- By State law, the Town is able to appoint a Tree Warden.
- There is a Northern Rivers Land Trust – an organization who may be able to support the Commission’s efforts in the future.
- She recently attended a seminar on global warming at UVM.
- She had been contacted by an organization which suggested the town appoint an Energy Coordinator

At 9:08 PM, Kevin motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Amy seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Lane