

Mary Ann Wilson

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To: "Mary Ann Wilson" <mawtclerk@pwshift.com>; "Billy Coster" <bcoster@vhcb.state.vt.us>; "Steve Rae" <srae@pshift.com>; "Jim Pease" <jim.pease@anr.state.vt.us>; "John Lepinski" <jlepinski@aol.com>; "Lepines" <lepine@mt-mansfield.com>; "Siri Rooney" <Siri@sas.state.vt.us>
Sent: Tuesday, December 02, 2003 12:27 PM
Subject: Minutes and Reports

Morristown Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes for

November 20, 2003

Members Present: Kevin Lane, Gert Lepine, John Lepinski, Jim

Pease, Steve Rae

Members Absent: Billy Coster

Guests: None

Steve called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM

The first order of business was the review of the October 2003 minutes. After review and discussion, John motioned that they be accepted as written. Gert seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

Next, the commission reviewed some of the information byproduct of the October Town Forum (co-sponsored by the Conservation Commission and the Trails Committee.) Steve distributed a list of attendees who expressed an interest in volunteering their services in support of the Commission's efforts. Following review and discussion, it was decided that we'd send minutes, reports (when appropriate) etc to these individuals as a means of keeping them apprised of our efforts.. Then, Steve distributed for review a copy of the Forum's questionnaire upon which the results had been tabulated as well as a copy of the *News & Citizen's* recap of the event. We will send a summary of the forum, along with the tabulated results to those who indicated they would like it. Next Steve distributed a copy of a report he had drafted for the Select Board summarizing the results of the Forum and recommendations based on those findings. After lengthy discussion, John motioned that the report, with a minor modification, be sent to the Select Board. Gert seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The next on the agenda was the Commission's report on the Duhamel property. Steve had drafted a report summarizing the Commission's findings and recommendations - which was distributed for review and discussion. After review and discussion, Kevin motioned that the Report be submitted as written. John seconded the motion and it passed unanimously (after Steve noted that he would correct the title to read "Recreational

uses of the Duhamel Property" (rather than "Non-Recreational uses of the Duhamel Property"))

Then, Steve shared with the Commission a communique he had received from Jim Ryan (VT Agency of Natural Resources Division of Environmental Conservation (VT ANR DEC) - Water Quality Division) regarding preliminary investigations into the possibility of some type of conservation of the Terrill Gorge. Following discussion, the Commission agreed that it would support the concept of such a conservation effort.

The next item on the agenda was discussion of the idea of requesting the Select Board to place an article on the Town Meeting Warrant asking for support of funding for the Conservation Fund. Steve shared with the Commission a copy of the warrant from Williston's Town meeting - which provided the basis for discussion. After discussion, it was decided that the request should be made.

The next item of business concerned the Planning Commission's efforts to refine zoning districts. Specifically, the pace of such an effort was discussed. Steve and Kevin emphasized the importance of proceeding in a deliberative, cautious manner and the Commissioners felt that such an approach was prudent and agreed that the process should proceed at its own pace. Steve distributed a package of materials he had gathered in support of the subcommittee's effort and the sub-committee hopes to meet prior to the Commission's December meeting.

Next, the Commission revisited Chuck Mitchell's request for support of the Stream Bank Stabilization effort (at the Oxbow). Jim Pease noted that Jim Ryan (VT ANR DEC) had been in touch with Chuck and would be taking a lead role in the project.

At 8:35 PM, Gert motioned that the meeting be adjourned. John seconded this motion and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Lane

> 11/21/03
 > To: Morristown Selectboard
 > From: Morristown Conservation Commission
 > Re: Town Forum #2 Summary
 >
 > On Tuesday, Oct. 28th, the Morristown Conservation Commission and
 > Morristown Trails Committee hosted the second town forum. Over 55
 > persons attended and discussed 3 topics related to quality of life in
 > Morristown. The topics were: Recreation on town owned land, Open
 > Spaces and Rural Character, and Morristown Trails. Everyone got to
 > attend 2 sessions, and
 in

> addition participants had the opportunity to fill out feedback sheets, with

> 40 people doing so. Some highlights of the survey include: Hiking and biking are the most popular summer recreational pursuits and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing the most popular winter pursuits. Other activities listed in order of popularity included: dog-walking, birding, fishing, snowmobiling, running, hunting, horseback riding, dog sledding, picnicing, and picture taking. A large majority of people thought that it was a very appropriate public goal for Morristown to preserve open spaces and Morristown's rural character. Topping the list of of important rural characteristics to preserve were: working farms, open fields, large tracts of forests, scenic back roads, clean streams for swimming and fishing, hiking trails and deer and bear habitat. A summary of feedback obtained for

> each breakout group topic follows:

>

> 1. The session on Recreation on town owned land focused primarily on the use of the town's Duhamel property and the Town Forest, 2 large tracts of land owned by the town. The Duhamel property was purchased a little over

10

> years ago primarily to provide a source of gravel for the town, but in addition to allow for recreational use on the remainder of the land. About 70% of those in attendance indicated that they had used these two town properties for biking, hiking, cross-country skiing or some other recreational use. A majority of people stressed the desire to keep the recreational use of the Duhamel property "low impact", and to not

advertise

> its use widely. People also supported the idea that policies should be posted at the entrances to town properties, and that some kind of management of recreational activities was needed. In the latter case, if the Selectboard chose to delegate the management of recreational use at Duhamel, the greatest number of people supported having the Morristown Trails Committee be in charge, with possibly a

> sub-committee formed to include interested parties.

>

> 2. The session on open spaces and rural character brought out concerns about sprawl, concerns about possible expansion at the airport, wanting to encouraging downtown development, and the need to have zoning address issues both in the downtown and rural districts. Almost all responses on the issue of housing, indicated a preference for encouraging additional housing to occur primarily downtown or near downtown. Zoning was seen as

an

> appropriate tool to help preserve Morristown's rural character, and expenditure of town funds to purchase easements for trails and protecting key open spaces was also supported. There was strong support for creating special "high elevation" zoning districts to protect wildlife habitat,

open

> spaces and/or scenic vistas.

>

> 3. The trails session included a discussion of the Rails-to-Trails possibility and participants at the sessions and in their written responses

> had a variety of suggestions for additional trails. There was strong support for conversion of the railroad bed to a trail, but a few people lamented the loss of rail transportation. Also noted was the need to address a potential conflict between motorized and

> non-motorized use. Most people supported either improving existing
 > trails or creating additional trails in town. Strong support for a
 > possible Morristown - Stowe rec path was indicated, with even stronger
 > support for a trail along the Lamoille River, connecting the east and
 > west ends of Morristown. Making route 15A pedestrian friendly was a
 > hope of more than one person. A concern about trails was that trail
 > users needed to do a better job of respecting landowner's rights in
 > general, and in particular, seek permission from landowners before
 > engaging in trail construction.

> Recommended actions:

> 1. Implement the steps which the Conservation Commission (in
 > consultation with the Trails Committee) has suggested for the
 > management of the Duhamel Property. (See separate memo) 2. Support
 > efforts by the Conservation Commission to be effective in
 taking
 > steps to protect key open spaces, along with other conservation
 > efforts. Specifically, The Commission recommends placing an article on
 > the Town Warning for Town Meeting to see if the voters will support
 > expenditures of funds for this purpose. 3. Support efforts by the
 > Trails Committee to maintain, improve and create trails. In
 > particular, support for a grant request for a trail connecting the
 > Ox-Bow to the School, which is their current, number one grant
 priority.

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 > 11/21/03
 > To: Morristown Selectboard
 > From: Morristown Conservation Commission
 > Re: Recreational uses of the Duhamel Property

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 > Over the last year, members of the commission have been involved in
 looking
 > at the town's Duhamel property, meeting with Don Avery, talking with
 > the Town's consultant, Ned Houston, talking with the Trails Committee,
 > and holding a Town Forum to get resident input. We present the
 > following suggestions to the Selectboard as a possible way to address
 > some of the issues which have come to our attention as a result of the
 > above study.

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 > * The Selectboard should consider whether it wants to delegate
 > oversight for the non-gravel uses of the Duhamel property to a
 > separate group. The results of the questionnaire returned by 40
 > persons who attended the

recent

> Conservation/Trails forum indicated that the Morristown Trails
 > Committee was the top choice for such an assignment. This is agreeable
 > to the Trails Committee and the Conservation Commission.

>
 > * It is suggested that there be a sub-committee of the designated
 oversight
 > group that has primary responsibility for the design, construction,
 > and maintenance of trails. The full oversight group (Trails
 > Committee) should oversee the work of this sub-committee. Individuals
 > wishing to carry out trail construction should work thru the
 > sub-committee, and have the
 authorization

> of the full Trails Committee.

>
 > * Any improvements or non-gravel management activities (such as
 > timber

> management) , will be carried out so as to minimize the impacts to the
> recreational use of the property. Any income derived from any non-gravel
> management activity
> should be placed in an account used for recreational management and
> providing recreational improvements. Any unavoidable impacts or damage to
> recreational trails, etc., should be restored/repared/replaced/relocated
> as soon as reasonably possible.
>
> * As a general rule, no activities should be conducted on the land
> by
any
> individual or group for business purposes, or for which they are
> compensated in any way (such as guide services, sporting events,
> plant cultivation, removal of native
> /
> indigenous plants, etc.). Any compensated activity must be approved
> beforehand in writing by the overseeing town officials, and occur only
> to the extent specifically authorized.
>
> * The Trails Committee should consider identifying a set of trails
> specifically designated for horseback usage.
>
> * Signs listing permitted uses for the property should be posted at
> the entrances.
>
> Other issues:
> * Maps / legends indicating the major trails / roads should be
installed.
> * The manner in which "permitted use" is enforced and the penalty for
> violation of "permitted use" needs to be addressed.
> * The barriers which prevent access by unauthorized motorized vehicles
> need to be inspected on a regular basis, and need to be
> maintained as necessary.
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