

Morristown Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
January 18, 2007

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

Members Absent: None

Steve called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

The first order of business was the review of the minutes from prior meetings. The minutes for October 2006 were unanimously approved on a motion from Jim and seconded by Amy. Following review, Amy motioned that we accept the November 2006 minutes as corrected. Gert seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

For the record, there was no December 2006 meeting due to lack of quorum.

Then came the report from the co-chair, with Gert noting additional residential development on the Stagecoach Road – just northwest of Morristown Corners – with more land bordering the Kenfield Brook being developed.

Steve offered the following:

- Heather Furman, Executive Director of Stowe Land Trust, indicated that there may be an update on the Valcour property in the upcoming week.
- Carol Bradley, Morristown Finance Director, has yet to deposit the \$17,000 awarded to the Commission by the Town into the Conservation Commission Fund. Steve will follow-up with Carol.
- The Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions is putting together a "listserve" to enable Commissions to better communicate and share information. The commission felt that it would be valuable to participate in this service.
- He has been informed that the State is beginning its periodic review of the Winooski Watershed, and suggested that it may be appropriate to suggest that the Sterling Valley Brook be considered for B1 classification.
- Steve and Amy attended the recent Planning Commission (PC) meeting on Housing. Steve left this meeting with the impression that PC is receptive to developing alternatives to the current Rural Residential Agricultural district (which represents a vast majority of land within the town)
- The Development Review Board (DRB) approved the subdivision of land at the northwest terminus of Stagecoach Road.

Then Jim reported on the following items

- Construction on Todd Shonio's property. Todd has done some construction on his land, in an area where there are wetlands, without obtaining the necessary State permits. After learning about the construction, the State reviewed the matter and imposed some conditions. Todd has complied with those conditions (the same conditions that would have been imposed had the review occurred "before the fact"). The State is satisfied with the outcome – since the appropriate conditions have been fulfilled.

- An 80 acre parcel on VT Route 12 in Worcester is for sale with a proposed subdivision. A number of groups feel that it would be unfortunate for "Worcester woods" to be developed. The Vermont River Conservancy (VRC) has negotiated a purchase agreement and must raise an additional \$120,000 to complete the deal.

Then the Commission discussed the Town Plan update. As noted previously, Steve and Amy attended the PC's January 16 meeting on Housing. Steve feels that the PC is open to development of additional zones, and following discussion, Steve said he'd write a letter to the PC from Conservation Commission (with a copy to the Select Board) expressing the Commission's general support for districts with larger lot sizes. Also discussed was the haphazard manner in which the PC is gathering input and the manner in which that will bias the outcome. Amy noted that a number of individuals speaking before the PC at the January 16 meeting were not even town residents ; they were developers from nearby town who were essentially "lobbying" the PC on behalf of their own interests. Steve motioned that we form "a subcommittee to work on the Town Plan update and that this subcommittee handle publicity, education, and interaction with other Town organizations." Following discussion, this motion was approved by a 4-1 vote (with Gert in opposition).

For old business, Amy reported that she had recently

- Attended a meeting of the Vermont Energy and Climate Awareness Network (VECAN) to learn about the group's objectives and resources available in support of them.
- Spoke with Ray Toolan, County Forester, to see when he is available to discuss the Town Forest Plan and obtain GPS data for the Town Forest's borders.
- Reviewed MACC's minutes and noted that they are overseeing the "brownfield" study on the Oxbox

For new business, Steve noted

- The town was granted \$5,000 to study the Ancient Highways issue.
- Mike Stafford, head of the Trails Committee, indicated that he does not have time to coordinate this group's efforts and may step down. One alternative arrangement worth considering is having the Trails Committee be set up as a permanent subcommittee of the Conservation Commission.
- A grant is available for tree plantings and he will forward the appropriate information to Heidi Krantz and Steve Berson.

At 8:03 PM, Kevin motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Amy seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Lane