

Mary Ann Wilson

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Subject: Morristown Conservation Commission Minutes - October 2004

Morristown Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes for

October 21, 2004

Members Present Gert Lepine, Steve Rae, John Lepinski, Jim Pease, Kevin Lane

Members Absent None

Guests None

Steve called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM

The first order of business was the review of the September 2004 minutes. Gert noted one inaccuracy in the minutes -namely, that it was not she, but rather Barb Farr, who had witnessed the event involving Merganser chicks. Following further review and discussion, the paragraph pertaining to the Town Forest which included the statement "No such plan currently exists to guide the property's usage" was amended to "No comprehensive plan currently exists to guide the property's usage". With these amendments Jim motioned that the minutes be approved. This motion was seconded by John and passed unanimously.

Next were the reports from the co-chairs, which included:

- Gert noted that she had recently visited the Dead Creek Wildlife Refuge to view the snow goose migration, an event she described in a single word - "awesome".
- Steve informed that Commission that the Selectboard had authorized the Commission to proceed with development of a Management Plan for the Town Forest
- Steve also noted the \$17,000 that the voters approved for the
- Conservation Commission Fund have now been transferred from the town's General Fund to the Conservation Commission Fund
- Steve noted that the Commission's letter stating general support for the Planning Commission's recommendations for the sewer expansion had been sent to the Selectboard
- Steve also noted that he had received an email from Chuck Mitchell (indirectly) indicating that the Vermont Land Trust is now interested in conserving "gateway" properties in addition to working farms and further encouraging conservation commissions, in general, to have land conservation as an important priority. Consequently, Steve suggested that we consider developing an inventory of such properties - particularly since the Recreation Committee is interested in conserving land near downtown for the purpose of walking, cross-country skiing, etc.

The next order of business was the budget for the upcoming year. (This budget covers routine operating expenses, such as publications, supplies, membership dues, etc. It is not the monies committed to the Conservation Commission Fund.) Discussed briefly was the question of applying for a "license plate" watershed grant. However, given the fact that we have no specific project in mind and that the Commission has many other projects / commitments, it was decided that we would not pursue a "license plate" grant at this time. In the end, it was decided that we would request the same operating budget for the upcoming year as was requested for the current year. Also discussed was the manner in which the current year's funds might be utilized. Suggestions included additional signage for the Duhamel property and ensuring that we have an adequate banner for Green-Up day (however there was no motion to actually expend funds)

Then, Kevin gave a brief report of his conversation with Julia Compagna, Hyde Park Zoning Administrator, regarding recent changes in Hyde Park's Zoning Bylaws. Attached are his notes regarding this conversation.

The Commission then discussed Guidelines for Conservation Commission Fund Usage. During the past month, Steve had shared a draft of the guidelines with Virginia Rasch, Executive Director of the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions, for comment. Steve reviewed with the Commission Virginia's comments and suggestions. After agreeing that the use of the Review Committee would be at the Commission's discretion, it was decided that we would share the document with other town bodies. Specifically, Steve will share it with the Selectboard and gather their feedback and Kevin will do the same with the Planning Commission.

Next, the Commission began discussion of the Town Forest Management Plan. However, given the magnitude of this topic and the relatively small amount of time remaining in this meeting, John motioned that this item be "first on the agenda of the November 2004 meeting after review and approval of the Minutes and the report of the co-chair". John's motion was seconded by Steve and approved unanimously.

Steve then offered the opportunity to discuss any "old business" and any "new business" - an offer for which there were no takers.

At 8:45, John motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Steve seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Lane

Notes from September 28, 2004 conversation with Julia

Process

- Neighborhood forums were held to obtain citizen input
- Had support of large land owners

Ended up with 2 Conservation Districts

- Conservation District 27 Acre - Mostly State Land (Green River Res) and Morrisville Water & Light

- Permitted- Ag / Forestry, Seasonal Dwelling
 - Conditional Use - Earth excavation, Outdoor recreation, Seasonal commercial, Forest Products & processing
 - Conditions - No impact on water quality, No scenic impact, No impact on natural values
- Conservation District 10 Acre - Land of questionable suitability for development (slope, ledge, etc) and / or far from public services
 - Permitted - Ag / Forestry, Single family dwelling, Seasonal dwelling, Home business & industry
 - Conditional Use - Earth excavation, Outdoor recreation, Seasonal commercial, Forest Products & processing
 - Conditions - No impact on water quality, No scenic impact, No impact on natural values

Next for HP - Viewshed Protection Overlay District for Green River - addressing issues such as

- Lighting
- Roofs (no highly reflective stuff)
- Logging (no clear cuts)

Suggestions for Morrisville

- Candidate Zones - Public Lands (Town Forest & State Lands) Ten Bends & Duhamel
- Permitted Use - Single Family, Ag / Forestry
- Specific Prohibitions - Commercial, Clear cut
- Viewshed protection

Motivations

- Clarification such that disputes and litigation are avoided
- Avoid driving out the locals. In HP, a lot of the development wasn't being done by "Mom & Pop" so that they could retire ; it was big money from "out of town"