Morristown Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
October 20, 2005

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

Members Absent: John Lepinski

Guests: Amy Walker

Steve called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM.

The first order of business was the review of the September 2005 minutes. Following review, Jim motioned that the minutes be accepted as written. Gert seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

Then came the report from the co-chair, with Steve offering the following pertaining to the Terrill Gorge acquisition:

- Vermont River Conservancy (VRC) has raised enough money to fund the purchase of the Kenfield Brook parcel, containing the traditional access to Kenfield Brook and Terrill Gorge.
- VRC has request a $250 contribution from the Morristown Conservation Commission (and has submitted the requisite paperwork).
- The lot-line adjustment has been approved by the DRB and the 30 day appeal period will be completed in mid-November.
- VT Fish & Wildlife is having second thoughts about the easement which grants public access in perpetuity. Steve will see how Shaun Bryer and Dave Crawford feel about having the Town hold the title and approach the Stowe Land Trust as well. Gert will contact the Vermont Land Trust to see if they will hold the title and learn about what other alternatives they might suggest.

Next the commission discussed funding:

- Steve and Dick Sargent were at the recent public hearing on Zoning Bylaw revision. Steve said that we'd like to discuss fundraising with Dick and get his thoughts on the matter and he indicated that he'd be willing to do so.
- The Selectboard is requiring those bodies which seek increased funding in the coming year to obtain signatures of 5% (about 160) of eligible voters as a demonstration of support. The commission discussed the need and value of doing so – agreeing that we should go through with this exercise. Steve will draft a document for the November meeting.
- Steve also shared a draft document requesting that the Morristown Conservation Commission fund receive $17,000 annually.

The next item on the agenda was the on-going discussion of Zoning issues. Kevin reported that he had contacted Mark Leonard about the 50 foot waterway setback for some clarifications, noting

- Mark had subjected the Donza subdivision to the 50 foot setback rule and it "passed".

- The current zoning bylaws have no definition of "shoreline" – so the State definition applies. Given the fact that the State definition has some inadequacies (it does not address streams / brooks), Mark has offered a definition for the Planning Commission which remedies this deficiency and names specific waterbodies referenced on the Tax Map.
- Mark noted that there is nothing in the bylaws that addresses what can and cannot be done with that setback (other than the fact that there be not buildings in that zone).

In response, the following thoughts were offered:

- Gert suggested that the language should acknowledge variations in the "shoreline" such as seasonal flows (depending on stream bank height etc – the shoreline may be very different in April than in August).
- Jim noted that "flood plain" concepts may be an important factor to consider.
- Jim also noted the challenge and problem of limiting the definition to specific "major" brooks since their tributaries play such a critical role.
- Steve wondered whether any use within 50 feet should be considered a "conditional use"

Also discussed was the concept of the MCC being part of the subdivision "pre" or "preliminary" approval process. Kevin will contact Mark to find out things such as

- Which bodies / organizations are on the list (School, Rescue, Fire, etc)
- At what point in the process they are notified

For "new business", there was a discussion of items for inclusion in the Annual Report, with the following being suggested

- Preparation for Green Up day
- Stancliff Property – (Ron reported that subdivision has been approved and that once the 30 day appeal period has been concluded he is ready to proceed with the transaction)
- Terrill Gorge
- Downtown Community Festival outreach
- Town Forest boundary delineation
- Bylaw funding guidelines

Also by way of new business, Kevin suggest that the Commission write a letter to local papers (Stowe Reporter, News & Citizen, etc) thanking those who donated money to the VRC for the Terrill Gorge acquisition

Old Business

- As approved by the Selectboard, the terms for members are as follows : Gert / John through 2006 ; Jim and Kevin through 2007 and Steve through 2008. Steve noted that the Commission should review membership annually, and make recommendations to the Selectboard to keep the appointment of members current.
- Steve noted that John has indicated his desire to terminate membership on the Commission. Steve will draft a letter to the Selectboard informing them of John's decision and thanking John for his outstanding service to the community.

At 8:35, Gert motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Jim seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Lane