

Morristown Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes for

December 16, 2004

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

Members Absent: None

Guests: Ray Toolan, Ron Stancliff

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

The first order of business was the review of the November 2004 minutes. Following review, Jim motioned that the minutes be approved. John seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

Next was a presentation by Ray Toolan, the County Forester. As County Forester, his mission, at a Town's request, is to educate and assist in the development of Forest Management Plans. Ray distributed CDs containing scanned images of the County Forester's file of documents (woodland records, correspondence, maps, plans, etc.) pertaining to the Morristown Town Forest. He then provided an overview of his approach for developing a forest management plan, which included:

- Developing an inventory (terrain, soils, drainage, plant species, animal species, boundaries, etc) via field work
- Understanding the Town's goals for the property - which may be informed by the results of the inventory
- Developing and implementing a course of action

He estimates 10-15 days of field work is required to gather data and that the initial plan development will require a couple of months. Following this initial development phase, he recommends, at least for the 1st year, routine trips into the forest to gather data which is specific to the season. Ray will develop a schedule of days during which he plans on performing his field work so that Commission members who are interested and available may accompany him. After his presentation a discussion took place about how his work could complement the Conservation Commission's work of arriving at an overall management plan to present to the Selectboard.

The next item of business was Ron Stancliff's presentation of his plans to conserve two parcels of land that he owns in Morristown. The first parcel is land which is adjacent to Joe's Pond. Ron presented the Commission with an overview of the natural features of this parcel as well as some historical information. The second parcel is a wood-lot located on the Lower Elmore Mountain Road. Again, Ron

provided a overview of the nature of the land as well as his vision for its ongoing use. Ron is currently working with an appraiser to have the lands valued and hopes to move forward with the conservation process during calendar year 2005. Steve informed Ron that the Commission has some funding potentially available (for professional services such as appraisal, survey, legal, etc) which he might wish to apply for. Also, Steve asked if Ron would "pilot" the Commission's Guidelines for Conservation Fund usage and Ron indicated that he would be willing to do so. Finally, Steve represented the Commission's willingness to continue working with Ron on his effort to conserve his land.

As a result of a motioned initiated by Steve and seconded by John, the meeting recessed at 8:05 PM and re-convened at 8:12 PM.

Next on the agenda was the report from the chair

- Steve shared with the Commission a letter he received from Tim Sullivan - who owns land adjacent to the Town Forest. While in the field recently working to establish the Town Forest boundaries, Steve and John met Tim who was clearing brush to facilitate the survey of his land. Subsequent to that meeting, Tim contacted the Commission asking it to express it's understanding of this boundary (as a means of preempting or mitigating any disputes brought by other parties in the future). Steve indicated to him that he was willing to meet with the Selectboard to indicate what had been observed.
- Steve reported that he had been in contact with the Stowe Land Trust and they are considering working with us in exploring appropriate lands which they might hold easements on.
- Steve noted that he was contacted by Bruce Linton (town resident) who may be interested in applying for a position in the future.

Next, the commission addressed it's Annual Report. During the past month, Steve and Kevin had collaborated to prepare a draft which was distributed and discussed.. Generally speaking, the draft document was well received. However, with respect to the item pertaining to the State's B1 Classification program, Gert suggested that the name "Kenfield Brook" be changed to "Beaver Meadow / Kenfield Brook" - since "Beaver Meadow Brook" is the more historically correct term for the waterway. (The "Kenfield" brook is a more recent term owing its origin to the Kenfield family - prior owner of what is now the Ernest Godfrey homestead). With this modification, John motioned that we accept the report. Kevin seconded the motion and is passed unanimously.

Next, Steve distributed a draft "Application form to Morristown Conservation Commission". This document is intended for use by parties who desire the support of the Commission for various types of projects (land conservation, environmental improvement, easements, recreational improvement, etc). Following discussion, it was accepted as a working document.

Steve then provided an overview of a letter from Jim Ryan, Watershed Coordinator for VT Agency of Natural Resources Department of Environmental Conservation to Paul McGinley which recapped their December 2, 2004 meeting. In this letter, Jim

commends Paul's "proactive approach to Morristown's natural resource management" and outlines the status of numerous projects, including

- The Oxbow Park - establishment of a riparian buffer and stream bank stabilization
- Kenfield Brook - Bridge & culvert repair, road improvements, land use protection, Terrill Gorge protection
- Hydroseeder project (erosion control)
- Morristown Stormwater Project (addressing stormwater issues in the Town's north end)

Steve then offered the opportunity to discuss "any old or new business" Other than noting that he (Steve) will not be available for the January 2005 meeting, there was no further discussion.

At 8:46, Kevin motioned that the meeting be adjourned. John seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Lane