

Morristown Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
August 18, 2005

Members Present: Gert Lepine, Steve Rae, Jim Pease, John Lepinski, Kevin Lane
Members Absent: None
Guests: Ron Stancliff

Steve called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM.

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

Then Ron discussed his efforts to conserve a piece of land, noting the following:

- He will go before the Development Review Board (DRB) at its next meeting for preliminary review of the subdivision plan and hopes to go before DRB in September for final review and approval
- The septic design has been completed and approved by the town
- He is composing a document discussing his motivation for conserving the land and suggested that the commission review, and perhaps contribute toward, that document
- Survey maps have been submitted to the Stowe Land Trust (SLT) and his attorney
- He is close to having a final easement agreement with SLT

Then came the report from the co-chair, with Steve offering the following:

- The Select board approved the extension of the Conservation Commissioner's terms. Kevin will follow-up with Lisa for the details
- The Commission shared a table with the Trails Committee at the Downtown Community Festival featuring photos of the Terrill Gorge and collecting contact information should a fundraising effort be needed.

Then the Commission discussed the effort to acquire a parcel of land that provides access to Terrill Gorge

- Steve reported that Jeff Myers, Executive Director of the Vermont River Conservancy (VRC), attended a recent Select board meeting. Jeff did a presentation about VRC and the Gorge. He obtained approval to raise money to purchase the property. Also discussed was the issue of who would hold title – the Town or the State.
- The parcel's owner has agreed verbally (and it is expected that a written agreement is forthcoming) to sell the property with the transaction to be completed by 10/15/2005.
- Then the commission discussed various aspects of funding for the purchase, specifically:

- Responsibility – VRC plans to do a direct mailing to a certain segment of the Morristown grand list to raise funds, so what role, if any, should the commission play?
- Use of the Conservation Commission Fund – Should the Commission recommend that a portion of the monies in the Conservation Commission Fund be used to support this purchase?

Steve distributed 3 different versions of the fundraising letter – 1 prepared by VRC, 1 a revision (by Steve) of VRC letter, and 1 being a draft letter (prepared by Steve) that the Commission itself might distribute. All 3 were reviewed and discussed.

At 8:20, following discussion and without decision on these issues, Kevin motioned that the meeting be adjourned and Gert seconded this motion. Steve cautioned that should the meeting be adjourned, these important issues would not be resolved in timely manner and the purchase may be jeopardized. Following discussion, the motion as denied by a 3-2 margin.

The next item on the agenda was preparation for the Friends of the Worcester Range (FOTWR) annual meeting. Given the commitments of the Commissioners and the number of other pressing matters before the Commission, Jim motioned that we “decline to host the event – given other commitments”. Steve seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

Jim then motioned that we “spend the next 30 minutes attempting to resolve the issues related to funding the purchase of land adjacent to Terrill Gorge”. This motion was seconded by John and accepted unanimously. Following discussion, Steve motioned that the “Commission support the VRC fundraising effort and explore additional fundraising options with interested individuals”. Following discussion, this motion was seconded by Jim and passed by a 4-1 margin with John passing the lone dissenting vote.

At 9:10 PM, John motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Kevin seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Lane