

Morristown Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
March 16, 2006

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

Members Absent: None

Guests: Ron Stancliff

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

The first order of business was the review of the February 2006 minutes. Following review, Amy 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:

- There is a joint meeting of the Planning Commission (PC) and Select Board (SB) on March 21 to discuss expansion of the sewer system. Kevin will attend as a Conservation Commissioner representative.
- No progress to report on the properties for sale which border Lake Lamoille. Steve had sent some email to the Vermont River Conservancy (VRC) but has not received any response. Jim will follow-up to Morrisville Water & Land (which owns adjacent land) to see if they are interested.
- Steve discussed the possibility of obtaining certain facilities (such as an email account, computer access, and filing space) in the new town headquarters with Shawn Bryer and Shawn seemed receptive to this request.
- The 2006 Town Report did not include the Conservation Commission as body whose membership is appointed by the Select Board. This error should be corrected in subsequent reports.
- Steve has confirmed the date for the VT Association of Conservation Commissions annual meeting. Steve and Amy plan to attend.

Next the commission discussed Green-Up day:

- Gert is making progress with the refreshments.
- Jim will print a map showing roads within the town so that participants can easily indicate routes they plan to cover. He will also print the directional signs.
- Jim and Kevin will handle installation and removal of the directional signs
- Steve will contact Joyce (of Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District (LRSWMD)) to discuss the following items:
 - Ensure LRSWMD has a Tent
 - Table (if LRSWMD cannot provide one, the Lepines will)
 - Bags – Gert noted that it would be good to have additional bags available at the Trombley Hill facility
 - Posters
 - Tires – How will they be handled this year?
- Posters – Gert will cover the North End ; Steve, Jim, and Kevin will handle downtown ; Amy will cover the schools

The commission then discussed briefly the upcoming (May 20) Town Forum being sponsored by the SB and PC, with the following items noted:

- Amy will have a table of commission-related materials, similar to the one used at Town Meeting, and including a sign-up sheet for those interested in or learning more about the commission.
- Steve distributed a copy of the questionnaire used by the Commission at the 2003 forum on Conservation & Trails for review.
- To help the town obtain a strong turn-out, Kevin suggested inviting those who have been supportive of the commissions efforts, including those who had signed the petition (for inclusion of the commission's funding request on 2006 Town Meeting Warning) as well as those who attended the 2003 Town Forum
- Steve suggested having a large map with simple methods allowing attendees to indicate areas in which they would encourage / discourage development as well as areas they would like to see preserved.
- Other items suggested for inclusion in the Town Forum include:
 - Big-Box retailer discussion
 - A "buy local" campaign
 - Ethics in local / town government
 - Planning Commission – More emphasis on long-term / strategic planning ; less on zoning minutiae

The commission then discuss the recent proposal that it contribute annually to the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) and Stowe Land Trust (SLT). The following themes were common among those expressing opinions:

- Sending town funds to out of town organizations could be a very difficult "sell" and may be viewed negatively by some town residents
- Money sent to these organizations should be tied to projects which have a more direct benefit to the town

Following discussion, it was decided that we would not, at this time, pursue annual funding of these organizations.

Next, it was noted that Marci Young had expressed her concern that the land used by the Community Gardens may be contaminated because a tannery formerly occupied this site. Discussion included the following:

- Steve noted that this type of soil testing requires great technical expertise.
- Gert commented that there had yet to be any apparent "fallout".
- Amy noted the importance of the Commission's records noting Marcy's concern (even though there is not information which currently supports the concern) for future discussion and analysis.
- Steve noted that LCPC had funding available for brown-field testing

Following discussion, it was decided that Jim would follow-up with Marcy and suggest that she contact LCPC (to see if their brown-field grant may be applied to this matter.

For new business

- Big Box Retail discussion – Steve distributed a couple of draft positions to fuel discussion on this topic. Following discussion, Amy motioned that “Kevin draft a letter to the Planning Commission incorporating the 2nd draft, as modified, for review and comment. And should all commissioners approve of this letter, Steve will send it to the Planning Commission on our letterhead with a copy to the Select Board.” Kevin seconded this motion – which passed unanimously following discussion.
- Amy showed a list of townspeople who provided contact information at Town Meeting – indicating that they are interested in the Conservation Commission. She volunteered to follow-up with these people by sending them a thank-you note and offering them the option of receiving the commission’s minutes (via email) and was authorized to do so.
- Ron Stancliff voiced his concerns about community septic systems – suggesting that the town consider prohibiting them because of the problems with “responsibility” when such a system fails. Further, he suggested that we invite Francis Favreau, former community health officer, to inform any such discussion.

For old business, Jim reported that the Vermont Environmental Court had ruled in favor Deb Wickert *et al* due to the DRB’s failure to consider the aesthetic impact.

At 8:28PM Kevin motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Amy seconded this motion and the meeting was so adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Lane