

Morristown Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
March 15, 2007

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

Members Absent: None

Guests: Richard Sargent

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

The first order of business was the review of the minutes from the February 2007 meeting. Following review, Jim motioned that we accept the minutes as amended. Gert seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

Next, the Commission held elections for officers for the upcoming year. Kevin motioned that "people continue to serve in their current capacity (Gert & Steve - co-chair; Jim - treasurer ; Kevin - secretary ; Amy - records keeper) for the upcoming year". Gert seconded this motion - which passed unanimously following discussion.

Then came the report from the co-chair. Gert followed-up on her recent contact with Ann Heath - who indicated that she may be willing to transfer the development rights on the parcel of land she owns - near the Town Forest / Beaver Meadow - to the State.

Steve also reported the following:

- The Selectboard approved our request for \$2,000 from the Conservation Commission Fund for the Stowe Land Trust's Valcour project. The next step for this project is a meeting with the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.
- Conservation Commission Survey - Between 80 and 90 copies of the survey were distributed at Town Meeting with about 40 already returned. Results are consistent with those from the 2006 Town Forum.
- Planning Commission Survey - Nothing has been finalized yet
- Dave Crawford indicated that the Select board will soon have a new policy regarding individuals who serve voluntarily on any of the town's official bodies. (The goal of the policy is for the Select Board to learn more about these individuals so that it may make more informed decisions.)
- Sullivan property - Steve reported that he had contacted Kate Willard, State of Vermont, to let her know that the Sullivan parcel (Beaver Meadow / Town Forest vicinity) is for sale. She expressed interest but indicated that funds are limited. Amy reported that she, as a private citizen, had contacted the Vermont Land Trust - with Mark McEthan expressing "interest" and a desire to "learn more" - especially since this parcel borders the Town Forest.

The commission then discussed reappointment of members whose terms are about to expire. While terms typically run for 4 years, at the Select Board's request, terms will be staggered. Recommendations, following discussion, are as follows - Jim for 3 years ; Kevin for 4 years ; Gert for 5 years.

The Commission then reviewed plans for Green Up day – with the following assignments:

- Amy – Banner
- Gert
 - Refreshments
 - table
- Steve
 - Folding directional boards from Joyce
 - Sign-up materials to Town Clerk
- Jim
 - Maps
 - Directional signs
 - Installation of directional signs (with Kevin)

Next, the Commission discussed the pending sale of a parcel of land on Route 12 (in “Worcester woods”). Jim noted that the “deadline” for a letter of support from the Commission to the Vermont River Conservancy (VRC) may have passed. He will contact VRC to inquire about the deadline and draft a letter if VRC still so desires.

Next on the agenda was the continued discussion of the Town Plan update.

- Steve noted that recent emails from the Planning Commission (PC) suggest that significant changes in land use are being considered for the Business Office Park zone and the CREW peninsula. Given the potential magnitude of such change, the Commission decided to focus on this issue at its next meeting.
- The PC’s next meeting addresses Energy
 - Kevin suggested the commission consider steps to educate homeowners about energy efficiency investments (which will reduce energy expenditures and may be subsidized by tax credits offered by the Federal government).
 - Amy went a step further – suggesting that the Commission host an energy forum that would offer information on a number of energy related issues.
 - Kevin also suggested that we review the Zoning Bylaws to see landowners are currently permitted to install windmills for personal use.

For ‘old business’:

- Jim informed the commission that USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) will be doing a tree planting along the Oxbow and will invite the Commission to participate.
- Amy reported that the town does have a Tree Warden – Bernard Burton Jr.
- Amy is interested in forming a Farmer Discussion group – the purpose of which is to provide an opportunity for farmers to discuss issues of mutual interest and to provide support for their goals and interests. Following discussion, she motioned that the Commission “form a subcommittee to organize and facilitate a farmers discussion group and bring ideas to the Town regarding agriculture”. Kevin seconded this motion – which passed unanimously following discussion. Gert volunteered to work on this subcommittee.

- Amy noted that the Town Report omitted the Conservation Commission from its list of "official bodies". Steve said he will see if this error can be corrected in future publications.

For 'new business':

- Steve said he will summarize the results from the surveys completed at Town Meeting for the Commission's next meeting.
- Amy said she'd like to organize a walk in the Town Forester with Ray Toolan (County Forester). The purpose of this walk is to "inventory" the forest. She'll contact Ray to discuss potential dates.
- Amy has begun seeing how other towns handle impact fees as part of an effort to see how our town may use this revenue stream to fund services.

At 8:14 PM, Gert motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Amy seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Lane