Morristown Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
February 19, 2009

Members Present: Steve Rae, Jim Pease, Kevin Lane

Members Absent: Gert Lepine, Dick Sargent

Guest: None

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

The first order of business was the review of minutes from the January 2009 meeting. Following review, Jim motioned that we accept the minutes as written. Steve seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

Minutes from the December 2008 were not available. Jim will prepare the December minutes for the next meeting.

Next on the agenda was the report from the co-chair – with Steve reporting:

- Vacant Town Positions – Among the vacant public positions listed in a recent *News & Citizen* advertisement was Green-Up Coordinator. For the past several years, the Conservation Commission has coordinated Green-Up efforts– but the Select Board is looking for an individual to serve as coordinator. It was agreed that Steve would serve as Coordinator with the Commission playing its usual role.

- Planning Commission (PC) – The Planning Commission learned of an error in the draft Zoning Bylaws. As drafted, the bylaws governing Prime Ag Soils (PAS) were applied town-wide. The PC's intended for these provisions to apply only to the Sewer Service Marketing Area (SSMA) and has revised the draft so that these provisions apply to the SSMA).

  According to these draft provisions, the Commission must be notified by the Zoning Administrator (ZA) within 15 days of receiving an application which impacts PAS and we are to be copied on all subsequent correspondence between the applicant and the ZA. Further, a per acre fee will be levied on each acre of PAS "lost" to development. Steve will suggest that this fee be deposited into the Conservation Commission Fund, rather that with "Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) or similar local fund" as currently drafted. Additionally, he will review the current formula with Bill Rossmassler and the ZA to better understand how "acres lost" is calculated.

- Stowe Land Trust – As a follow-up to discussion item from last month's meeting, Steve will write and send a letter from the Commission to the Stowe Land Trust encouraging them to broaden their geographic horizons by working with towns that border it (Stowe).

- Forest Legacy Seminar – The Lamoille County Natural Resources District will conduct a seminar on February 25, 2009 discussing methods of preserving forest land posthumously.

- Select Board – The Select Board will attend the PC's March 17th meeting to review proposed Zoning Bylaws revisions. Kevin will attend so that he can report on this meeting to the Commission.

- Capital Plan – The Town Administrator is leading an effort to prepare a capital plan – a document which catalogs upcoming capital projects (5 year horizon) with their estimated expenditure and has asked the PC to participate (due to their statutory role).

Next on the agenda was preliminary Green-up Day Planning. Commissioners will maintain their traditional roles (Gert – refreshments ; Steve – coordination with LSWMD and Town Clerk ; Jim – maps and signage ; Kevin – signage). Additionally, Jim will takeover responsibility for the Green-up banner. One suggestion was that the signup materials provided to the Town Clerk inform participants that leaving full bags at the road side is the preferred method (allowing people to work on days other than Saturday and saving participants the need to drive to the dump.)

The Commission then discussed Town Meeting. In prior years, the Commission had a table of materials organized and staffed by Amy Walker. Following discussion, it was agreed that we would not have a table this year due to time constraints and other commitments.

The Commission then discussed potential initiatives for the upcoming year. Suggestions include

- Town Forest – There is a stand of Norway Pine which Ray Toolan, County Forester, recommends be harvested. Proceeds might fund other Commission projects (completing the Town Forest Plan, inventories (wetlands, critical habitat, etc), software) or simply be deposited in the Conservation Commission Fund.

- Gaining access to and control of software and data used for mapping.

- Land Conservation – Forming a subcommittee which more pro-actively pursues conservation projects (developing a profile or criteria for opportunities to pursue, meeting with land trusts to learn about the criteria they apply when evaluating projects, meeting with prospective applicants, etc)

For "old business" Steve again reminded the Commission about the importance of maintaining strong membership. Steve will contact Brent Teillon, retired professional forester and entomologist who attended the prior meeting. Kevin will contact Rachel Duffy – who attended the December meeting – to learn about her on-going interest and to see if there are recent Peoples Academy graduates who she feels might be interested.

No items of "new business" were offered for discussion

At 8:40, Kevin motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Steve seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Lane