Morristown Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
February 15, 2007

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

Members Absent: None

Steve called the meeting to order at 6:50 PM.

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

Then came the report from the co-chair, with Gert informing the commission that she had recently talked with Anne Heath – a landowner in the Beaver Meadow / Town Forest vicinity who may be interested in placing a conservation easement on her land.

Steve offered the following:

- The Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (AVCC) is undergoing major changes. They will no longer have an Executive Director and all service will be provided "on-line" (via the ListServe). They do, however, plan to keep the annual meeting.

- The money approved by voters in the 2006 for the Conservation Commission Fund ($17,000) has been deposited in the Commission's account.

- The Town Plan Update Subcommittee met recently. The Planning Commission (PC) will be doing a survey. The Subcommittee feels this step is laudable but that inclusion of additional questions would be appropriate. Steve motioned that we "send a letter to the PC commending this action and recommending that the survey be amended to include questions on additional topics". Jim seconded this motion, which passed unanimously following discussion.

- Town Meeting is just a few weeks away and the commission will again have a presence. Amy will coordinate a display with the standard items. Steve will make available copies of a survey similar to the one used by the CC for the Spring 2006 Town Forum.

Next, the Commission discussed a joint project by the Stowe Land Trust (SLT) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). These organizations have negotiated the purchase of development rights on approximately 30 acres of biologically significant land adjacent to the Morristown Bog and Joe's Pond – and they seek $2,000 in funding from the Town in support of the project. Amy motioned that we "support the project financially but follow-up with SLT to learn about restrictions and easement details to ensure that the ecology of the bog is preserved". Kevin seconded this motion which passed unanimously following discussion. In anticipation of the Commission's support of the project, Steve had drafted a letter from the Commission to the Select Board recommending that $2,000 be released from the Conservation Commission Fund in support of the project. This draft was distributed, reviewed, discussed, and approved as amended. Steve will contact the town administrator to schedule an appearance at a Selectboard meeting to present the request for approving the expenditure from the MCC fund.

The commission then discussed a project of the Vermont River Conservancy (VRC). The VRC has negotiated the option to purchase approximately 80 acres on VT Route 12 in Worcester and Elmore (in an area know locally as "Worcester woods"). In support of their fundraising efforts, they have asked local Conservation Commission's to write letters expressing their support of this project. The Commission does feel that this is a worthy project and would like to go on the record as supporting it. Jim volunteered to draft the letter – which he will distribute for review and comment.

For old business,

- Amy mentioned that Deb Wickart is still troubled by the awarding of the subdivision permit for the land at the northwest end of the Stagecoach Road. One suggestion offered was that Deb request a non-financial item be added to the Town Meeting agenda to discuss this matter

- Gert noted that she had spoke recently with Tim Sullivan – who owns land Beaver Meadow / Town Forest vicinity – and that he is interested in selling this land
    - Steve suggested that we contact the State of Vermont to see if they are interested in acquiring this parcel (which is adjacent to the Mount Mansfield State Forest)
    - Amy suggested that we develop a "vision" – listing the lands we'd like to be conserved

For new business

- Steve noted that the Commissions need to vote for officers in an upcoming meeting and that some commissioners need to have their term renewed by the Select Board.

- Jim gave the commission an update on the Brownfield study underway in the Community Garden. It is believed that the tannery used a vegetable (not arsenic) based process. Still, surface soils and groundwater will be tested for hydrocarbons and metals.

At 8:47 PM, Gert motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Amy seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Lane