

Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

October 19, 2012

Call to Order: 6:02 p.m.

Roll Call: Steve Wood, Chairman, Chris Irish, Gary Dickerman, Ken Harlow, Dianne Harlow, Vice Chairman, Nick Koloski

Guest: Tracy Hutton, City Planner

Absent: Steve Cutts

Review of Minutes:

- Review of September 20, 2012 Minutes
Motion by: Gary Dickerman 2nd: Ken Harlow
Chris Irish abstained as he was not present. Motion Carries

Finance Report:

- Question was asked last month about the varying amounts being paid to Jeff. Tracy informed us that Jeff has been working more hours, thus the increase in amounts. He is half way through the process.

Old Business:

- Camper Presentations – Joe Marsinelli attended Barry Conservation Camp. He reports that he would have stayed all summer if he had the chance. He enjoyed the firing range, and the campfires. Everyone was respectful to each other and there was a lot of comraderie. He learned to follow blood trails. The food was great. Steve and Katrina haven't been able to reach Derek for his presentation.
- Natural Resources Inventory – Tracy met with Jeff on Tuesday: he has a few more days of field work. He needs to finish on Grissom Lane area. He has discovered there are approximately 100 wetland areas in Claremont. Some large, some small. Tracy and Jeff set the criteria for wetlands to half an acre. He has been finding mink but very little otter. Erica Ferland, Science Teacher at Stevens High School has been working with Jeff so that he can utilize the students for field work.

New Business:

- Discussion with Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT) – Peg Merrens, Land Conservation person at UVLT. The agency is 27 years old and was created by a small group who wanted to make land conservation more accessible. When the Conservation easement is used on property, the land owner continues to own the land, but the UVLT owns the development rights to the property.

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They are stewards for keeping the land as is, their goal is to preserve farmlands, woodlands, wildlife habitat and wetlands. They have over 43,000 acres that they've protected. They protect farm land for families. They buy development rights to properties when funds are available. They also are stewards of trails and scenic resources. They also have areas on the Connecticut River for primitive canoe access. Each easement is unique, some are accessible to public, some not, it depends on the landowner's purpose.

The area they cover runs from Charlestown, NH./Springfield, VT in the South to Bath, NH/Ryegate in VT. They work with forty-four towns. Claremont doesn't currently have a lot of easements currently. Just recently in Weathersfield, VT., property on the southeastern side of Mt. Ascutney was purchased using grants and local fund raising which allowed the purchase of 380 +/- acres. UVLT is willing to help as we get into the Natural Resources Inventory. When Natural Resource Inventory is presented we need to invite UVLT.

Gary asked: Does a property's tax status, that is in current use change and can it be conserved? A land conservation easement does not change the tax status and yes, it can be conserved.

Communications:

- Upper Valley Land Trust Annual Report 2012 – available from Steve
- D.E.S. to the City of Claremont, Wetlands and Non-Site Specific Permit 2012-01866 for Stevens Brook/289 Elm Street – previously presented by Bruce. No action needed.
- D.E.S.- City of Claremont, Complete Forestry Notification, File #2012-02630, Map 68/Lot 3
- N.H. Association of Conservation Commission – 42nd Annual Meeting Notice – Nov 3, 2012 is deadline for signup October 25th.

Other:

- We previously spoke of a tour of City owned forest land/timber sale at the White water Reservoir area. Steve has been in contact with Dennis to arrange this. After careful consideration, it has been put on hold for now as schedules are not cooperating.
- Red River Computer recently held their Community Service Day. They were able to collect trash on the Bobby Woodman trail, cut brush at the airport and paint the interior at Arrowhead. Steve to write a Thank you note.
- Chris asked: Is the Bobby Woodman sign going to go up on Chestnut street? As far as we know, the plan is to install it once the area is cleared of brush.
- Dianne asked: Should we consider becoming members of the NH Conservation Association? Steve to check into the cost of membership and what resources would be available to us as members.

Adjournment: Motion by: Gary Dickerman 2nd: Ken Harlow Motion Carries Time: 6:47 p.m.

Submitted By: Dianne Harlow, Vice Chairman