

Meredith Conservation Commission

Meredith, NH 03253

Minutes of the Meredith Conservation Commission Meeting....April 7, 2005

Meeting:

Meeting called to order by Chairman John Sherman at 7:00 PM.

Members Attending:

Barbara Smyth, Peter Miller, Robert LeCount, John Sherman, Donald MacFarlane/ Alternate members Ron Kiesel

Pauli Novicki, Paul DelFrari, Paula Wanzer. Town Representative Brenda Vittner.

In the absence of regular members Pisapia and Colburn the Chairman authorized Ron Kiesel and Pauli Novicki to vote in their place.

Minutes:

By motion of Kiesel, seconded by Novicki and voted affirmatively the minutes of the public meeting of March 17 were approved as written.

With the minutes changed to read "The Commission authorizes Ralph Pisapia and Paul DelFrari acting as a committee to obtain an appraisal on the property discussed in executive session" by motion of Kiesel seconded by Miller and voted affirmatively the minutes of March 28 were approved.

Business:

Chairman Sherman brought up the problem of communication by E-mail. After discussion it was decided that members would limit their communication via E-mail..

Chairman Sherman next brought up the subject as to when a member should recuse themselves from discussions on

a situation on which they might have an financial or other interest. The question involved member Barbara Smyth. Smyth is an abutter of Hamlin. Should she recuse herself from discussion concerning Hamlin? Smyth felt that as she had no financial interest in the outcome she did not have to recuse herself. In order to avoid any negative interpretation of her presence during discussions of Hamlin she would voluntarily recuse herself.

Chairman Sherman requested the names of those members planning to attend the seminar "Saving Special Places 2005" This seminar is run by the University of New Hampshire. cooperative extension. In the past this has been a very informative session for our members. Four or five members plan to attend. Each members will send in their application and fee (\$50.00) and will be reimbursed later by the Commission.

Committee Reports:

Dredge and Fill Committee

The following dredge and fill application to the DES have been reviewed since the last report:

Lorraine Maxwell 68 Cattle Landing Tax Map U-33, Lot 31	Recommended approval Construct 6' x 30' piling dock on 6 pilings along with 4 fender pilings
Kevin Keefe 168 Blackbrook Road Tax Map - Lot# -	Recommended approval Install seasonal boat lift between existing docks.
Leo Montambeault 73 Meredith Center Road Tax Map R-9, Lot# 34	Recommended approval Increase size of beach replenish with sand.
Roberta H. McCarthy 18 Bay Shore Drive Tax Map U-2, Lot# 7	Recommended approval Replace existing retaining wall install rep-rap along 20' of eroding shoreline.
William & Phyllis Eddy 11 Quimby Road	Recommended approval 5 pilings to be replaced

Tax Map U-29, Lot# 23

Christopher D. Boothby
22 Quimy Road
Tax Map U-29, Lot# 16A

Recommended approval
Replace existing dock

Donald & Mary Larson
138 Veasey Shore Road
Tax Map U-37, Lot# 1A

Recommended approval
Peplace existing 6' x 24' dock with 6' x 34' seasonal dock install
seasonal boat lift and 14' x 30' seasonal canopy

By motion of Smyth, seconded by MacFarlane and voted affirmatively these action by the Dredge and Fill Committee were ratified.

Media Committee (Signage)

The committee brought in several different designs that might be used to identify easement areas. No decision was made. The committee will bring price to prepare a sign for the Piscopo property next meeting.

Open Space Committee

Chairman Sherman requested that each member state their position on accepting the "Forever Wild" easement on the Hamlin and Eames properties.

LeCount Not at this time. I believe that first we should produce a management plan for each of these lands. That we do not delay the program of placing easements on these properties I recommend the the Commission hire a certifies environmentalist to aid in the production of this management plan. Once accepted by the Commission then we can approach several organizations such as Northeast Wilderness Trust, SPNEF, and others if qualifies to manage the easement.

Novicki Believe that the Northeast Wilderness Trust proposed easement is too restrictive. Would have to be modified before acceptance.

Kiesel I support a forever wild easement on the Hamlin and Eames as long as it included a provision for salvage logging in the event of a natural disaster. I also feel that we continually address Hamlim and Eames as two separate parcels. A lot of time and money has been expended in the acquisition of the Eames parcel as an extension of the Hamlin Conservation and Recreation Area. I feel that we should consider both Hamlin and Eames equally and protect both parcels in the same way.

DelFrariThe public hearing on this land highlighted the uniqueness of this land parcel. It is vital for a Conservation Commission to promote the understanding of this uniqueness, recognized in numerous ways the science of the Town's Natural Resource Inventory, as an example of bio-diversity enhanced by the inclusion of rare plant and animal species. A management plan we bring to the Town, and for which we seek a Grantee to hold, must combine the wisdom that diversity contributes, often in unapparent ways, to the ecological well-being of an area, and that this well-being is what we celebrate in the beauty of this land. It helps sustain - without need of our labors - much of what we hope to convey to the long-distant future residents of Meredith.

Miller The "Forever Wild" conservation easement must be modified as follows:

1. Recreation Management. The Northeast Wilderness Trust's role must be purely advisory. The Town Meredith, through its Conservation Commission, must retain control of all permitted forms of recreation, including horseback riding, mountain biking and hunting.
2. Timber cutting, Trees may be cut for the following reasons, and only for these reasons; (a) to keep trails open and free of widow-makers; (b) to keep viewpoints open; (c) To assist with clean-up and erosion control following natural catastrophe; (d) To create material on site for bridge construction/repair or waterbars or other trail necessities.
3. Back-up easement holder must be acceptable to Meredith Conservation Commission. This clause would kick in if Northeast Wilderness Trust ceased to exist.

If Northeast Wilderness Trust is willing to accept these modifications, I support granting them the easement. If they do not accept these modifications, we should approach other land trusts to find one who will.

In accordance with the easement. I oppose commercial timber cuts and wildlife management cuts on Hamlin and Eames because these lands were purchased for recreation and conservation, and logging potentially conflicts with both. If the easement were to permit logging, best management practices would have to be employed forever, for the easement will be in perpetuity. It is human to err, and logging will inevitably and repeatedly damage the recreation and conservation value of these lands. I might support doing easements on Hamlin and Eames one at a time. The Northeast Wilderness Trust does not require that we do them both together. We might lose some of or all of the Sweet Water \$60,000 if we do them one at a time. I would

support wildlife management cuts on other town-owned conservation properties, as in Lighton Wildlife Area and abutting Carlton Forest, provided that such cuts were guided by a comprehensive wildlife management plan. The plan would target identified species, using field information produced by wildlife experts. The plan would explain how the proposed timber cut would enhance the habitat of the selected species. The plan would take into account land use on neighboring parcels. Because shaping wildlife habitat is a long-term process, the plan should be forward looking. I would prefer that the plan aid the survival of declining or threatened species, if feasible.

Pisapia received by E-mail Regarding the proposed Sweetwater, Forever Wild easement, I feel we should not spend any additional time on it. The Hearing was well worth doing as it brought out a number of issues that needed to be aired and I think it helped us focus our feelings as well. While I can lean toward being more of a protectionist than a conservationist at times, I feel that this property is not the right place. Also, I was hoping that we might be able to negotiate with them to modify some of the restrictions so that we could have the best of both worlds, the dollars and the protection we are seeking. But after the hearing, I now feel they are limited in how far they can go and I respect that. We should not disparage their approach as it was honest. I support their efforts in the larger world but I don't believe one can apply their philosophy to smaller parcels such as Hamlin and Eames while trying also to manage multiple use and public recreation.

That said, where do we go from here. First, I feel we need to have a consensus on the Commission that we want additional protection applied to Town conservation lands. I feel we have that but not sure we have ever articulated the reasons why we want it. For the most part, I feel we need the additional "overlay" protection to protect the town from itself. We know that people change chairs in the various town offices and with that comes different approaches and philosophies toward conservation. What we need are some overlay easements that would preclude certain activities that would damage or subvert the purposes for which the lands were first placed in conservation.

We have seen some example easements that were passed around that other towns have used that would do what we want. An approach is to pick the one we like, modify it to our pleasure, and then shop it around to some of the "easement players" such as SPNHF, TNC or others. This would take some time and might even cost us some dollars but it is worth trying if we are serious. We should appoint a lead person(s) so the effort can stay focused.

Sherman Was always wanting an easement on north end of Hamlin due to old growth etc that needs protection So would be in favor of an easement on Hamlin like Sweetwater but would need to be changed so that Meredith has management control over use and care. Although I believe Eames and other parcels need some type of easement under no condition would agree to an easement on Eames now until we have studied and walked the land---just owning the land is no reason to lock it up forever. We need an overall management plan.

MacFarlane The current easement is too restrictive. We do need an easement on both Hamlin and Eames. Because of the old growth, the wetlands, beaver ponds and existing trails all of Hamlin should be free of commercial cutting. Probably the same is true of Eames, but I don't know enough about it

yet

We have so many town properties in the Chemung area in close proximity that we should look at them as a totality, along with what private (binding) easements exist. After careful study of what exists in the area we should develop a management plan for the area which could involve a variety of easement types on town land. We should not be afraid to spend some money to do it right.

Chairman Sherman indicated that the next meeting (April 21 at the annex) will be a work session. All members will read the Northeast Wilderness Easement document and mark those phrases, paragraphs, or sections that they object to. All such recommended changes will be discussed. It is hoped that these discussions will lead to a modified easement document that the Commission could accept. This amended document would then be returned to Northeast and or other easement groups if that be the Commission's desire for review

By affirmative vote the following officers were elected for the 2005 year:

John Sherman	Chairman
Ralph Pisapia	Vice-Chairman and Treasurer
Robert LeCount	Secretary

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 PM.

Next meeting scheduled April 21 at the Town Hall Annex.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert A. LeCount, Secretary

