

Minutes of the Meredith Conservation Commission Meeting November 5th, 2009

Members present: Don MacFarlane, John Sherman, Ralph Pisapia, Peter Miller, Robert LeCount, Paula Wanzer, Mark Billings

Alternate members present: Robert Davis, Mark Tuckerman

Guests: Ralph Kirshner, Member, New Hampton Conservation Commission; Robert Wenstrup, President, Waukewan Shore Owners Association (WSOA); Duncan McNeish, Treasurer, WSOA; Bruce Bond, Chairman, Waukewan Watershed Advisory Committee (WWAC) and Member, Center Harbor Conservation Commission; Bob Vogler, Secretary, WWAC; Tim Whiting, Member, WWAC.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of October 15th were approved unanimously.

Snake River Preservation

Snake River is the channel formed by the outflow of water from Winona Lake to Lake Waukewan. It is thick with aquatic vegetation. In addition to providing important wildlife habitat, this channel helps filter the water as it flows toward Lake Waukewan, which is the Town of Meredith's drinking water source.

The Waukewan Shore Owners Association (WSOA), a tax exempt charitable organization, is attempting to permanently preserve the 2800 foot long, 100 +/- foot wide strip of land that lies between the railroad corridor and Snake River's west bank. This land lies wholly in the Town of New Hampton. Bob Wenstrup noted that this lot is "considered buildable," and Ralph Kirshner described the lot as quite buildable. The WSOA considers the preservation of this land critical for the protection of water quality in Lake Waukewan. The Waukewan Watershed Advisory Committee (WWAC), a Town of Meredith entity, concurs with that opinion.

If the WSOA succeeds in purchasing the parcel, deed restrictions would permanently preclude development of the land and boating access from its shore. Only passive recreations such as hiking, snowshoeing, and cross country skiing would be allowed. Following purchase, the land would be transferred to the Town of New Hampton and its Conservation Commission.

The WSOA and property owner Robert Stowell have agreed to a \$30,000 purchase price. A P & S has not yet been signed. The WSOA had originally hoped to raise the \$30,000 by Dec 31st of this year, but that is no longer realistic. Wenstrup reports that the WSOA and Stowell have agreed to everything but the closing date. There appear to be no other potential buyers at present.

Kirshner stated that the New Hampton Conservation Commission has voted to expend \$5,000 from its Conservation Fund for the purchase of the parcel. The WWAC had hoped to expend \$10,000 from its budget for the same purpose. It recently learned that Town of Meredith policy precludes that because the land lies in another township.

The only Town of Meredith entity which can contribute to the purchase of the parcel is the Meredith Conservation Commission. This is enabled by RSA 36-A: 4-a, 1 (a) and 1 (b), which the Meredith Town Meeting adopted in 2009 (warrant articles 5 and 6). The Town of Center Harbor did not place these RSAs on its 2009 warrant, thus its Conservation Commission cannot expend money from its Conservation Fund for the purchase of the parcel. The land on the east side of Snake River lies in Center Harbor, likewise a portion of the Lake Waukewan shorefront, hence its relevance to Center Harbor.

The WSOA would like the Meredith Conservation Commission to contribute toward the purchase of this Snake River parcel. Though Wenstrup was reluctant to specify a dollar amount, WSOA treasurer Duncan McNeish put a figure of \$10,000 on the table.

In response to Miller's query, Pisapia reported that Meredith's Conservation Fund currently has a balance of \$24,056.19, with an expected balance of \$58,086.19 at year end after transfer of Land Use Change Tax to the Fund.

During discussion following the presentation, Pisapia asked whether the WSOA has requested a bargain sale price. Kirshner replied that because the land is assessed at \$70,000+, the agreed to purchase price is, in effect, a bargain sale.

Sherman noted that the Town of Meredith would be the principal beneficiary of the preservation of this property because of the enhanced protection of its drinking water source.

Sherman suggested that we poll Commission members regarding their support for the WSOA's conservation initiative. During discussion leading up to the motion, the wisdom of the Commission was to not commit to a dollar amount at this juncture.

Thus, Pisapia moved, seconded by Billings, that "The Meredith Conservation Commission is willing to participate in this project to a financially significant extent for the protection of the Lake Waukewan watershed." The motion passed unanimously.

Dredge and Fill

The following applications to the State Department of Environmental Services have been reviewed since the last report:

John W. Carson
28 Tiger Trail

Recommend approval.
Impact 100 square feet of lake surface

Tax Map I-13, Lot #30 on a seasonal basis.

Diane R. Sanderson Recommend approval.
75 Neal Shore Road Repair existing docking facilities in kind,
Tax Map U-01, Lot #35 no change in size or location.

Both of these applications were Permits By Notification. In the case of this type of application, the applicant may proceed 10 days from the date signed by the Commission. If not signed by the Commission, the applicant must wait 25 days before proceeding.

Treasurer's Report

Pisapia updated the Commission on the status of all of its accounts and funds, as follows:

2008 operating budget - amount still encumbered: \$16,773.55

2009 operating budget - amount spent year to date: \$ 1,304.70, amount remaining:
\$17,710.30

Conservation Fund - current balance \$24,056.19, anticipated year end balance \$58,086.19
(includes Land Use Change Tax of \$34,030 collected to date)

Open Space ETF - current balance \$1,870.50

2009 donations received to date: \$150.00

2009 interest paid to Conservation Funds to date: \$467.50

Reimbursements and Expenditures

On motion of Pisapia, seconded by Billings, the Commission unanimously agreed to pay the following reimbursements:

\$47.87 to volunteer Warren Clark (40 Lovejoy Lane, Meredith) for expenses related to manufacture of three trail signs.

\$5.88 to Peter Miller for cost of two rolls surveyor tape.

\$240.12 to John Sherman for paint and surveyor tape used to mark conservation land boundaries.

\$62.17 to Mark Tuckerman for expenses related to maintenance of Hamlin/Eames trails.

On motion of Billings, seconded by Pisapia, the Commission voted unanimously to pay Ian Graphics, Bill Becker proprietor, \$725 for cost of the Leighton Wildlife Sign. This is exactly the estimated cost Becker provided when he was awarded the contract.

Page Pond Timber Harvest

The Commission's ongoing total of the amount received from the timber harvest, as recorded in previous sets of minutes, has been slightly inaccurate. As Chairman MacFarlane explained, it appears we inadvertently double counted one of the checks somewhere along the way.

The correct total as of our last meeting (Oct 15th) was \$50,219.53, as confirmed by Administrative Services. Since then, the town has received two additional checks in the amount of \$4,205.32 (Oct 16th) and \$1,974.03 (Oct 23rd). That brings the total received to date to \$56,398.88.

The town can now pay in full the \$54,000 owed to the Trust for Public Land.

Signage

Miller went on site with DPW chief Mike Faller to stake the location of the Leighton sign. The sign will be mounted behind the stone wall directly in back of the Leighton plaque. This will create a positive visual presentation, and the plaque and sign will complement each other. Miller has requested that the sign be installed before the ground freezes. The cost of the two 4 x 4 posts needed to install the sign will be charged to the Conservation Commission, anticipated expense \$40 +/-.

Miller showed the Commission one of the three trail signs volunteer Warren Clark has made for the junctions with the Smyth Easement trail. Commission members were quite impressed. Clark will begin making the Smyth Easement roadside sign later this month. The cost of the wood for this large sign will be approximately \$138, Clark to be reimbursed on presentation of receipt. Clark once again will be donating his labor.

Clark is interested in making Trex trail signs for use in Page Pond. He will make several demos using a brown background and yellow lettering, then meet with the Commission to discuss further.

Smyth Easement Commemorative Plaques

Per Colburn's suggestion, Miller contacted the NH Correctional Facility sign shop regarding the manufacture of bronze commemorative plaques. The sign shop manager informed him that they do not make exterior bronze plaques.

Miller solicited all-inclusive cost estimates for two 12 x 9 bronze plaques from four plaque manufacturers, with responses as follows:

Innovative Signs, Longwood Florida. \$495 each less 10% time limited discount for a total cost of \$889. Estimated weight of each plaque: 10 pounds.

Bronze Memorials, Port St. Lucie Florida. \$463 each. Did not succeed in making telephone contact, thus did not get estimated weight.

North Shore Monuments, Brookville New York. \$485 each for a total cost of \$970. Estimated weight of each plaque: 14 pounds.

International Bronze, El Dorado Hills California and Albertson New York. \$389 each for a total cost of \$778. Estimated weight of each plaque: between 8 and 10 pounds.

Because North Shore Monuments demonstrated strong customer relations, offering a wealth of advice on how to install plaques on granite boulders, and because their plaques are likely to be the most substantial (per weight comparisons), Miller moved, seconded by Sherman, that the plaque contract be offered to North Shore Monuments. Motion passed unanimously. Miller will follow up with North Shore.

Deposit must be paid prior to rendering of artist's proof, and full payment must be made prior to the casting of plaques. Brenda Vittner has informed Miller how this can be done.

Installation of the plaques on site will require drilling holes in granite boulders, use of epoxy to secure studs to boulders, and sealing perimeter of plaques with silicone to prevent frost and ice from building up in back of plaques. Various commission members expressed the know-how to do this, which Miller was thankful for. As Miller explained, "We want someone who got a higher grade in shop than I did leading this charge on site."

Open Space

Sherman praised volunteers Terry Lance and the Kellers for monitoring boundaries in Hamlin, Eames, and Leighton. He also expressed appreciation for Jack McEwen's ongoing volunteerism.

Announcements

Sherman will lead a guided walk of the proposed Sherman Easement land and the Blueberry Hill portion of Page Pond this coming Sunday at 10:00 AM. Meet at Sherman's place on Blueberry Hill Rd. Wear safety orange, it's muzzle loader season.

Meeting adjourned at 9:03.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Miller
Secretary