

CENTER HARBOR CONSERVATION COMMISSION
APPROVED Meeting Minutes
Cary Mead Meeting Room
Municipal Building; Center Harbor, NH
Monday, March 10, 2014

CALL TO ORDER At 10:10 a.m. the meeting was called to order. Commission members present were Bruce Bond, Chair, Maureen Criasia (Moe), Randy Mattson, Gwen Bronson, Harry Viens, and Barbara Picard. Commission members absent with notice were Karin Karagozian, and JoAnn Wood. Invited guest, Dave Mallard, Land and Stewardship Director of the LRCT, joined the meeting at 10:45.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 11, 2014 minutes were reviewed. A motion was made by Moe and seconded by Randy to approve the minutes as presented. The minutes were unanimously approved.

UPDATES

Fogg Hill Conservation Easement/LRCT:

The LRCT has received an Aquatic Resource Mitigation Grant from the Dept. of Environmental Services (DES), which will require LRCT to develop a management and stewardship plan for the property prior to writing the Conservation Easement document. It is expected that the management plan will be completed within the next several months according to Dave Mallard.

Conservation Commission 2014 Action Items

Moe created a list of action items for the Commission. We will use this to prioritize the years' initiatives.

All agreed town website (including Conservation Commission webpage) updating is a priority, however, we do not have funding at this time.

Moe is going to take on updating the NRI and the Natural Resources Chapter of the Master Plan with Rick Van de Poll.

Development of a Conservation Plan will be an important first step. There are some Conservation Plans on line from other towns and UNH Cooperative Extension has guidelines for creating Conservation Plans that we can use as a template.

Creation of a Conservation Easement Management form should be added to the list.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moe spoke with Rick Van de Poll over the weekend. We have received a "Letter of Engagement" from him to revise the NRI/Natural Resources Chapter of the Master Plan for the budgeted amount of \$5,000.

Rick has said he will resubmit the application for Belknap Woods Beaver Pond Prime Wetland Complex to the DES at no charge.

NEW BUSINESS

Hale Property

Alan Hale, owner of land surrounding a 7.9 acre parcel of land owned by the Town, (tax map 221, lot 17) wishes to purchase the parcel from the Town. The Commission will meet on Thursday, March 13, for the sole purpose of reviewing the proposed offer to purchase the Town's interest in order to make a recommendation to the Select Board.

Per RSA 41:14-a, in order to transfer ownership the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board must review the transfer request and make a recommendation. Two public hearings are also required and then the Selectmen make the determination about transfer of the property. The Conservation Commission will review the map, note its proximity to natural resources/prime wetlands and make its recommendation.

APPOINTMENTS

Guest, Dave Mallard on Conservation Easement Monitoring

Dave Mallard, Land and Stewardship Director, LRCT, addressed the Commission about conservation easement monitoring, particularly as it applies to monitoring Fogg Hill. Once the Town purchases the easement on Fogg Hill, it will be charged with monitoring the property.

Monitoring is done to assure that conditions, including reserved rights and restrictions set forth in an easement, are being met. These may include assuring that terms of a tax break are being honored (there will be none for Fogg Hill), and verifying that restrictions set forth in the easement such as timbering, use of chemicals, motor vehicle use, maple sugaring, etc. are being observed.

Volunteers, who will monitor the property at intervals set forth by the Town, will be identified. The monitors will assure that conditions set forth in the easement are being satisfied. Since the Fogg Hill property will not be used for a tax deduction, there will be no need to do annual monitoring for the IRS.

A Baseline Documentation Report captures the state and conditions of the property at the time the easement is placed on it. In the case of Fogg Hill, the report will be prepared by Dave Mallard and Rick Van de Poll. Reserved rights of owners and restricted uses such as clearing, mining, subdivision and development, building of structures, etc. will be included in the report. The documented evidence in the report will be used by the monitors to help identify any changes taking place on the property, authorized or not.

Tools monitors will have at their disposal will include topographical, survey and photo point maps together with aerial photos of the property. These will map out what is there for open space, water, structures, boundaries, etc. A photo point map is a survey map, which photo-documents the condition of the property. Compass bearings are taken of each photo, which documents any boundaries and important features, buildings, and anything that might be subject to change. Usually this is only done once, at the outset. It may be done again if any major changes happen such as timbering or removal of structures as potentially in the case of Fogg Hill. There could also be natural changes that take place such as flooding, tornados, or other significant changes brought on by nature, that would require new photo documentation.

Initially, a management plan associated with the property will be written by Rick Van de Poll and Dave Mallard who will do the baseline work, create the photo point map, etc. LRCT will sign off on it once completed. Surveyor, Carl Johnson, has done some survey work on Fogg Hill and Don Berry, LRCT, is going to hire him to do some more.

Monitors will be trained by Dave Mallard. They will be responsible for reading the easement, understanding the conditions set forth in the easement, taking photos as necessary, and otherwise becoming familiar with the property features and boundaries.

There will be an assigned property adopter as well to walk boundaries, report on needs for signs, paths, etc. The monitor(s)/property adopter(s) could be the same person(s).

Dave will run a monitor training session this spring, date and time to be announced.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Moe, seconded by Bruce. Meeting adjourned at 12:10

Respectfully submitted, Barbara Picard, Secretary