

The Conservation Commission Public Hearing on proposed Town participation in the Fogg Hill expansion project being led by LRCT (Lakes Region Conservation Trust) was called to order at 6:00 PM on December 3rd in the Cary Mead Room, Center Harbor municipal Building by Harry Viens Acting Chair of the CH Conservation Commission. Present were Commission Member Gwen Bronson, Don Berry from LRCT, Maureen Criasia and Barbara Picard – residents of Center Harbor.

Viens opened the meeting with a brief statement of purpose and then invited Don Berry to present the specifics of the proposed project. Mr. Berry reported that the project was an acquisition of 42.7 acres of property from James and Angela Bascom bordering the existing Fogg Hill conservation property and Bear pond. This acquisition will expand the Fog Hill project to 235 acres. Center Harbor would contribute \$18,000 from the Conservation Fund towards acquisition of the property and would receive a conservation easement on the 42.7 acres. Ms. Bronson expressed concern that it was critical that the easement ensure the property is permanently protected. Mr. Berry assured her that this easement would protect the property from development in perpetuity. The property in question will provide access and parking for visitors to the Fogg Hill conservation area property, including the trail system that serves the property. A full range of outdoor uses will be permitted. Mr. Berry provided maps and a project summary which are being incorporated into the record of this meeting.

Ms. Criasia spoke in favor of the project noting that it is consistent with the Town's Master plan objectives regarding conservation of undeveloped, high value land within the Town and maintenance of the Town's rural atmosphere. In addition it provides an additional layer of protection over a designated wetland (Bear Pond complex) and the underlying aquifer, which will also protect the headwaters of the Waukegan watershed. Ms. Picard supported this position adding that the acquisition is a "bargain" since the contribution (\$18,000) represents about 13.9% of the property value, and typically easements often represent anywhere from 50 – 75% of the property value. So, in a sense, the Town is "making money" on the transaction. Mr. Berry added that as the land is currently in current use there is minimal impact in terms of reduced tax revenue (somewhere on the order of a few hundred dollars).

Ms Criasia also provided a copy of her discussion points which is appended to these minutes as part of the meeting record.

No other public input was provided, so Viens and Ms. Bronson reviewed the material as presented . Lacking any other members of the public being present Viens closed public input at 6:30 PM and motioned that the Conservation Commission request that the Town participate in this project and that the Town Treasurer process a check to LRCT for the \$18,000, which will be held in the Town safe until LRCT presents a draft of the easement that has been reviewed and approved by the Town attorney. Ms. Bronson seconded the motion. Viens will draft a letter to the Treasurer and will present the draft to the Select Board for an informational review before submission to the Treasurer.

No other business being brought before the Conservation Commission Viens adjourned the hearing at 6:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Viens,
Acting Conservation Commission Chairman