

## DEERFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

1967 - FIFTY YEARS AND COUNTING - 2017

Meeting Minutes & Public Hearing

April 9, 2018

**Members Present:** Haley Andreozzi, Serita Frey, Wes Golomb, Kate Hartnett, Ben Minerd

**Members Absent:** Erick Berglund

**Guests:** Ellen O'Donnell, Dan Kern

Serita Frey called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

**Education Grant Opportunity:** Guest, Ellen O'Donnell updated members on the status of the collaborative project between the Conservation Commission and her 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at Deerfield Community School (DCS). Funding for the project is coming from a New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC) grant, made jointly available to schools and conservation commissions, to partner on a conservation project that would not only be a hands-on educational opportunity, but also provide a benefit to the community.

Three of Ms. O'Donnell's five classes focused their attention on the Dowst-Cate Town Forest, and two classes concentrated on the Lindsay/Flanders Conservation Area. During this past school year, **students used a land cover classification system to assign standardized codes to the land cover found within the various habitats on each property and researched what types of wildlife might be living in those areas.** Based on the results of wildlife tracking this winter, students identified types of wildlife existing on each of the conservation parcels. Trail cams will further confirm the results of their research.

**Additional proposed student activities** for Dowst-Cate include performing trail clean-up, adding a picnic table and benches, or hanging bat boxes. Students overseeing Lindsay/Flanders proposed erecting a bulletin board, posting signage to identify the trail leading from the ball field into the conservation area, including a trail map, or hanging bird houses. DCC agreed with Ms. O'Donnell's strategy for selecting additional activities and will be updated on their progress.

**DCC members volunteered to speak to the classes** about the work that conservation commissions do in their respective communities. Ms. O'Donnell has 107 students.

### Easements and Land Protection

**Project #35:** Members discussed their March 25<sup>th</sup> limited site visit to the property. The site was generally observed to include valuable wetland habitat and steep forested terrain with the potential for a trail extending into and connecting with those in Epsom. Two of the four parcels are in Deerfield, and two are in Epsom. Taken together, they would add ~480 acres to a large, unfragmented block of conserved land that, including the abutting town forests in both Deerfield and Epsom, would then total approximately 1,000 acres. The project scored favorably in a review of both the *Bear-Paw Criteria for Evaluating Land Conservation Projects* and Section 7 of the *Deerfield Open Space Plan*.

Reasons for conserving the area included:

- Location within the Deerfield Open Space Plan green infrastructure,
- Protection of naturally sensitive areas, including wildlife corridors
- Connectivity of unfragmented areas
- Development of a natural greenway and trail system
- Connection of green infrastructure with neighboring towns to create linkages for open space on a regional basis

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Additional discussion included:

- Value of the expansion of Deerfield's existing Town Forest
- Positive aspects of increased hunting and recreational opportunities
- Review of the appraised valuations
- Review of estimated project costs in light of other pending conservation expenditures
- The need for surveys on three of the four parcels
- The need to consider cost per acre
- Pros and cons of acquiring the existing WRP NRCS easement
- Access options if only the backland were conserved
- Development potential
- Impacts of harvesting (by others) to the quality of the existing wetland and wildlife habitats

Dan Kern noted that he will be moving ahead with the Epsom portion of the project and with the **pre-proposals for LCHIP funding that are due in June**. Dan will submit an application for the larger, joint project, and if awarded, grant funds would be pro-rated between Epsom and Deerfield. **DCC will endeavor to make a decision regarding its level of participation in the project by June.**

**Project #31 – Marston Farm:**

**Loose ends still existing on the project include settling a Planning Board matter with respect to the survey, ensuring access to the 128 acre parcel, and finalizing the language in the conservation easement deed.** Changes to the 1991 easement language for the 128 acre parcel are currently under review by the Charitable Trust Division of the NH Attorney General's Office. Serita Frey noted that the **extended deadline for the transaction grant is September** and suggested that another meeting with Ms. Beye and Mr. Labrie should be arranged.

**Open Space development – Mt. Delight Road (Map 413 Lot 62):** Haley Andreozzi briefed members on the various methods of conveying the development's easement area to the Town. Surveyor Eric Mitchell has not made contact with DCC since his last visit in January. At DCC's March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, members concurred that the **best choice is to convey fee ownership to the Town with a subsequent conservation easement** to be conveyed to a qualified conservation organization. Ms. Andreozzi suggested that these could be back-to-back conveyances to ensure that appropriate conservation language would exist at the time of the transfer of ownership.

**Town Forest Protection – Boisvert Town Forest:**

Dan Kern will send the most recent draft of the easement deed. Final edits and specific language to be incorporated into the deed **that would require locating trails in a manner that would minimize impacts to wildlife** is pending. Ben Minerd will further explore possible GPS mapping of the Town trails. The GPS data can then be submitted for trail locator analysis and the **information provided by the analysis will identify locations for trails that will have the least impact on wildlife**. Bear-Paw preparation of baseline data is pending a break in the weather.

**Approval of Minutes:** A motion by Kate Hartnett to approve the **minutes of the March 12<sup>th</sup> regular meeting and public hearing** was followed with a second by Haley Andreozzi. The motion passed with two abstentions. Ben Minerd moved to approve the **March 25<sup>th</sup> minutes of the Project #35 site visit** with a second by Haley Andreozzi. The motion passed with one abstention.

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**Finance:** In his absence, Serita Frey read an email report submitted by Erick Berglund. Mr. Berglund has not received conservation fund balances for the months of January, February, or March. The last known **balance is as of December 31<sup>st</sup> and was \$350,235.89.** Mr. Berglund reminded members that for 2018, DCC is operating on the default budget. In order to estimate DCC's financial position after the completion of pending projects, **Mr. Berglund will be asked to provide a figure for the average revenue over the past five years into the Conservation Fund.**

**Regulated Wetlands:**

**Wetland Buffers:** Haley Andreozzi researched guidance on the benefits of wetland buffers. NH Fish & Game's *Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve* and *The Nature Conservancy* have developed a website with many useful resources. [Buffers Options for the Bay](#) focuses on the Great Bay Ecosystem, but the information provided also has value for more inland locations.

**NH Wetland Rule Revisions:** Ms. Andreozzi reported that *NH Association of Conservation Commission's* Executive Director, Barb Richter, believes that based on the less than favorable comments received in a meeting convened by the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), the agency will be going back to the drawing board. The **deadline for additional public comments on the NH DES release of the draft revisions of the NH wetland rules is April 20<sup>th</sup>.** **Public Comments may be submitted electronically to:** [MaryAnn.Tilton@des.nh.gov](mailto:MaryAnn.Tilton@des.nh.gov) and must include: **2018 Wetlands Rules Comments** in the subject line of the email. Ms. Tilton can also be reached at **(603) 271-2929.**

**Eversource Site Visit:** A representative from Eversource is scheduled for the May 14<sup>th</sup> DCC meeting to discuss its recent application for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The **proposed structure replacement project is for transmission line maintenance on Eversource Energy lines 373 and 391 including the replacement of two structures, STR 178 and STR 185.** Work will be conducted on a 48 acre **Eversource-owned parcel, Map 416 Lot 062, North of Mountain Rd. and Southwest of Nottingham Rd,** and will require temporary impacts to wetlands. In preparation for the meeting, **a site visit to the Deerfield, Cate Road substation has been scheduled for Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm** to review the quality of previous Eversource CUP project performance.

**Announcements/Correspondence/Reminders:**

Kate Hartnett will be meeting with two volunteers and Deerfield Town Planner, Sylvia von Aulock to **discuss updating the August 2010 Deerfield Open Space Plan (DOSP).** Wes Golomb announced that he recently met with Deerfield's local energy committee and will be involved with its energy plan. Mr. Golomb has volunteered to provide his assistance with an Energy Chapter update.

Serita Frey adjourned the meeting at 8:50 pm.

**The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 14, 2018**

*(Please check the website for scheduling changes)*

[townofdeerfieldnh.com](http://townofdeerfieldnh.com)

*These minutes were prepared and submitted by Judy Marshall. Revisions, if any, will be contained in the minutes of the next meeting. If amended, a revised version will be posted to the website, after approval by the Deerfield Conservation Commission.*