

DEERFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
1967 – FIFTY-SIX YEARS AND COUNTING – 2023
Regular Meeting Minutes – June 12, 2023

Attendees: Josh Freed, Serita Frey, Erroll Rhodes
Members Absent: Haley Andreozzi, Chloe Gross
Visitors & Guests: Wes Golomb, Tim Gross, Barbara Mathews, Roberto Prieto
Conor Madison (GZA), Stephanie Gardner & Ashley Friend (Eversource)

Chair Serita Frey convened the meeting at 7:04 pm

PUBLIC HEARING:

Fred and Amanda Morrisette Memorial Forest
Patrick and Sandra Cassier – 47.48 acres – Candia Road - Map 419 Lot 088

Serita Frey opened the public hearing at 7:05 PM stating that per a discussion with Town Counsel, “We don’t believe it is legally required, but out of an abundance of caution we are holding a public hearing regarding this expenditure from the Conservation Fund.”

The following notice appeared on the Deerfield Town website in accordance with the provisions in RSA 675:7 (as amended), on May 1, 2023. Additionally, it was posted in the following locations: the U.S. Post Office, Deerfield, NH, at two locations at the George B. White Building, and The Forum on line.

The Deerfield Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing in accordance with RSA 36-A:4, for the purpose of accepting public input about contributing to the transaction costs associated with a conservation easement on 47.48 +/- acres of land situated on Candia Road, Map 419 Lot 088, in the Town of Deerfield, in conjunction with the Fred and Amanda Morrisette Memorial Forest Easement being donated by the landowners, Patrick J. and Sandra A. Cassier, through the Deerfield Conservation Fund. The Town will acquire an executory interest in the easement. The public hearing will be held on June 12, 2023 at 7:00 PM at the George B. White Building, 8 Raymond Road, Deerfield, NH.

Public Comment:

On behalf of herself and Rob Mathews, Barbara Mathews commented in favor of the Conservation Fund expenditure toward the acquisition of the easement. Ms. Mathews wished to thank the Cassiers for their generous donation. Roberto Prieto echoed the Mathews sentiments.

Serita Frey adjourned the public hearing at 7:09 pm and reconvened the regular meeting.

Motion: Chair Frey moved to expend conservation funds in the amount of \$19,230 to contribute to the transaction costs of a conservation easement on 47.48 acres of land situated on Candia Road, Map 419 Lot 088, in the Town of Deerfield, in conjunction with the Fred and Amanda Morrisette Memorial Forest easement being donated by the landowners, Patrick J. and Sandra A. Cassier, through the Deerfield Conservation Fund. The motion was seconded by Josh Freed and passed unanimously.

Currently, in order for DCC to expend conservation funds toward the project costs, the Town must retain an interest in the property. The pending easement deed will grant the Town of Deerfield an executory interest in the easement, requiring the BOS to sign the easement deed, thus fulfilling the requirement allowing for the expenditure.

Kaitlin Deyo of Bear-Paw forwarded the draft easement deed to DCC on 5/24 for review in anticipation of the July 17th BOS signing date. Ms. Deyo summarized that the Reserved Rights include recreational trails, and both commercial and non-commercial forestry, which will require a management plan. The landowners wish to maintain approximately 10 to 15 acres in an unmanaged state. Additionally, the easement features low-impact trails around the perimeter and the implementation of Fish and Game methodologies. No wheeled vehicles will be allowed. Ms. Deyo offered to attend the July 10th DCC meeting to answer any additional questions regarding the deed. The Bear-Paw Board will be meeting the first week of July to finalize the easement

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Ms. Deyo presented an **illustration of a sign that the Cassiers propose for the property**, which, however, incorrectly implies that the Town of Deerfield is the easement holder. Inasmuch as the Town only holds an executory interest in the easement, it was decided to replace the suggested titling with Bear-Paw Regional Greenways.

Eversource CUP - File No. 04.0191410.69 - Conor Madison - GZA

Project Summary:

The overall project involves the **replacement of select structures (i.e., utility poles) on the 373 and 391 Transmission Lines in the Towns of Auburn, Candia, Chester, Deerfield, Derry, Northwood, Raymond, Rochester, and Strafford, New Hampshire**. Replacement of the existing structures is necessary in order to maintain the safety and reliability of the system. The 373 and 391 Transmission Lines are located within an existing approximate 270-foot-wide utility right-of-way (ROW). The 373 and 391 Transmission Lines run parallel to each other starting at Scobie Pond Substation in Derry, New Hampshire and continue for approximately 19 miles to the Deerfield Substation in Deerfield, New Hampshire where the 373 Transmission Line ends. The 391 Transmission Line then continues parallel to the 385 Transmission Line from the Deerfield Substation to the New Hampshire and Maine border in Rochester. **In the Town of Deerfield, the proposed work area begins at Raymond Road and continues approximately 4.6 miles northwesterly to Nottingham Road.**

Criteria for the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit under Article 210.7 of the Deerfield Zoning Ordinance

- Construction is essential to productive use of land not within the Wetlands Conservation District
- Methods minimize detrimental impacts to wetlands, and restoration of site nearly as possible to original condition
- No feasible alternative route not crossing a wetland has less detrimental impact
- Economic advantage alone is not a reason for the proposed construction

Project Information:

- Pole replacement in Deerfield (16 along the 391 Transmission Line – 21 along the 373 Transmission Line)
- Wooden poles to be replaced with steel poles
- Life span of Wooden poles is 50 years
- Life span of steel poles is 80 to 100 years
- 5-to-10-foot increase in height of poles
- No Optical Groundwire
- No ROW or tree clearing
- Start date could be as early as July 2023, with actual timeframe ranging from July 2023 through March of 2024
- Hoping for a dryer work season
- Outage schedule, structure replacement and restoration determined by contractors

Permitting:

- Statutory Utility Permit by Notification
- Alteration of Terrain permit pending with the state
- Compliant with 2019 Best Management Practices
- Submitted to Fish and Game and Natural Heritage Bureau (BMP's, Monitoring and Erosion Control)
- 391 and G146 projects to Planning Board on Wednesday 6/14

Environmental Impact Minimization & Oversight:

- Temporary wetland impacts
- Strive to move out of the wetlands if possible
- New Vernal Pool survey performed during 2023 vernal pool season (will provide report)
- Timber matting to be used
- Silt socks to be utilized – not netting
- Weekly Inspections
- Adherence to Fish and Game recommendations (monitoring, mat-removal, observance of turtle habitats)

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Restoration

- Matting to be removed in 2024 (only allowed over one growing season)
- Rolling restorations to be implemented (finish as they go)

Recommendations:

- Third-party verification (not included unless specified - usually Keach-Nordstrom Associates)
- Serita Frey to forward DCC letter of recommendations to Planning Board

Attention to Landowner Concerns:

Resident Ken Cohen, who has observed activities from his home on Mountain Rd, expressed concerns regarding impacts to wildlife and amphibians. Mr. Cohen pointed to the **road servicing structures 191 and 192 being heavily trafficked by construction vehicles and ATV's**, especially where mats had been removed, and wondered if the road starting at Mountain Rd. was going to be extended to structure 193. It was explained that access to structure 193 will be via a road originating at Reservation Rd. Conor Madison (GZA) further indicated that the **area between structures 192 and 193 were not being impacted** and did not require vernal pool mapping. **Eversource is happy to reach out to Mr. Cohen with specific details as the project progresses.**

The lower-growing trees and vegetation fail to deter traffic on the access road, which has increased since its construction. Mr. Madison agreed that **there can be a discussion about blocking/gating the road to prevent unauthorized traffic** and work with landowners to restrict access. **Seasonally approved use (snowmobile access) could be regulated with a gate, although permitted vs. non-permitted uses were hard to enforce.** A recommendation for a gate at Mountain Road could be addressed in DCC's letter to the Planning Board, as it was in the letter received from the Lamprey River Advisory Committee (LRAC).

Great Brook Trail – Tim Gross Eagle Scout Project:

Tim Gross reported that he performed a **comprehensive evaluation of both the Great Brook Trail and the Dowst-Cate Town Forest.** Mr. Gross has proposed the following:

- Rebuilding signs with directions and additional information
- Constructing a bridge over the stream on the Coffeetown Rd. side
- Clearing and re-blazing of trails

Conservative pruning was recommended to keep hikers within the trails and a **narrow bridge to restrict equestrian traffic.** Mr. Gross was encouraged to contact Al Jaeger to inform him of the proposed activities. Mr. Gross stated that **Holly Tomilson reported her discovery of an unauthorized bench**, constructed of synthetic material. Mr. Gross was asked to take photos to document his concerns, and to record any discarded or questionable materials. It was recommended that there be **clarity as to the correctness of the blazing.**

DCS Paving Project – Update:

At the request of the DCC, Wetland Scientist, Spencer Tate, reviewed copies of the plans for the proposed Deerfield Community School Parking Improvement Plan (DCC and Planning Board consultation were a condition of warrant article approval for the funding). Mr. Tate provided his comments to the DCC, which were also forwarded to the DCS Board, and to Keach-Nordstrom Associates.

Barbara Mathews urged the prevention of runoff into Freese Pond; that based on the stipulation in the warrant article, there was a responsibility to *do it right*. It was noted that **permeable pavers would not be an option** in this case since the current gravel base, which has been compacted, would first need to be removed and restored. The better option is a well-thought-out drainage plan that incorporates Mr. Tate's recommendations. The project has been put out to bid with the objective of paving during summer vacation; however, it is felt that rushing would be foolish. There has been no response from the Planning Board or Keach-Nordstrom. **A letter expressing DCC's concerns will be sent to the Planning Board, DCS and the BOS** in the hope that DCC's recommendations will receive their support. The next meeting of the DCS Board is 6/21. Barbara Mathews thanked the DCS for its efforts to improve the project.

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Cottonwood Estates Easement:

The Deerfield Police contacted DCC, looking for a key to the gate to the conserved area in Cottonwood Estates. DCC has a spare key to the gate; however, it has since been determined that the lock is missing. Members felt that a **replacement should be purchased** and a key provided to the Police and Fire Departments. Over the years, oversight of the conserved area has been complicated by the absence of a Homeowners' Association with whom various Town agencies can work.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion:

*Serita Frey moved to approve the minutes of the **May** regular meeting.*

Erroll Rhodes seconded the motion

Vote:

The motion was approved (Mr. Golomb abstained)

Finance Report – *STATEMENT* balances in the conservation fund

May Ending Balance	\$371,543.43	(Includes April Interest \$600.37)
Q4 2022 LUCT	\$0	(Confirmed)
Q1 2023 LUCT	\$19,500	(YTD = \$19,500)

Passage of Article #21 – DCC to receive 100% of LUCT **beginning** April 1, 2023 for Q2 2023
(Approximately \$1,300 has been collected to date for Q2 2023)

Membership:

There are **openings for two regular members to fill two 3-year positions** (previously held by Brian Adams and Wes Golomb), and **1 open position for an Alternate Member** (previously held by JoAnne Bradbury). Chair Frey asked, and guest Ken Cohen responded, that he would be interested in becoming a member.

Public Outreach:

Josh Freed volunteered to take on the responsibility of posting information on the DCC Facebook page.

Regulated Wetlands & Shorelands

Erroll Rhodes reported that he attended the NHACC Wetlands Training Program

Chair Frey adjourned the meeting at 8:35 pm,

A small reception was held in honor of Wes Golomb's quarter-century as a member of the Commission. Wes will be stepping back and taking on the role of Alternate Member.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for 7 PM on Monday, July 10, 2023

(Please check the website townofdeerfieldnh.com for scheduling changes) These minutes were prepared and submitted by Judy Marshall. Revisions, if any, will be contained in the minutes of the next meeting and posted to the Town website, after approval by the Deerfield Conservation Commission

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