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Town of Grantham Grantham Conservation Meeting Minutes January 18, 2010

Chairman Richard L. Hocker called the Conservation Committee meeting to order on Monday, January 18, 2010 at 7:05pm. The meeting was held in the Jerry Whitney Room at Grantham Town Hall located at 300 Route 10 South in Grantham, NH

PRESENT

Chairman Richard (Dick) Hocker
Andy Eastman
Jeremy Turner
Tom Vogel
Pat Woolson (Alt.)
Merle Schotanus (Alt.)

ABSENT

Adele Furdyna

Members of the public:

Approval of Minutes

Chair Hocker asked the Committee members if they had reviewed the minutes from the December 21, 2009 meeting and if there were any additions/corrections. There being none motion was made by Pat Woolson and second by Tom Vogel.

Unanimously Approved

New Business

None

Other Business

Forest Management Plan actions:

Hocker stated that one of things the plans called for last year and into this year was some action and that he had asked Town Administrator Becky Newton to put some money into the GCC budget for the log landing/parking area at the end of Miller Pond Road at the foot of the hill. Hocker then asked Jeremy Turner what he thought the GCC should be doing with this plan.

Turner stated that he guessed that in terms of any capital improvement for the so-called town forest at the end of the road, one idea is that a fair amount of that capital improvement could be completed through a commercial timber harvest. Turner said when the Forest Management implements some work up there a fair amount could be rolled in to the actual work being done as a commercially requirement. As part of the

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contractor engaged can perform those improvements as part of their work to be carried out rather than Forest Management going up there and work carried without the commercial operation which is something to think about. Turner went on to say that the improvement of landing and a parking facility can be carried out when they're up there, because this needs to be in place for the contractor to have the landing/facility and yarding etc. Turner also stated that any capital improvements beyond that the GCC might want to consider might involve the trails and things commercial operators might not want to be involved in.

Turner said that the GCC might want to re-channel some of the spending on the Smith lot and some other business the GCC is involved in might be more prudent than parking areas/trail pads, trying to connect these bigger pieces through the Flewelling property/Town forest more direct driven cost and table some of the landing/yarding and parking.

Hocker asked Turner how the GCC would go about this and do they want to do that this year with respect to his (Turner's) professional judgment in the forestry aspect of it. Hocker asked is it bad timing? Turner stated that the personality of the property being a mountain top property, would be more conducive to carry out work when it's cold/frozen otherwise there is a lot of water up there, poor drain sites/bedrock and on top of that market wise there's not a lot of high quality saw timber so to speak of up there. Turner went on to say that merits low-grade market/low grade work force to be able to produce and process pulp/chip wood and the low-grade market was not very stable and that is why he didn't think it would be prudent to try and rush into anything right now with this winter being nearly over.

Hocker asked Turner if the GCC was jeopardizing anything by not moving forward. Turner said he didn't think so and that so much of the work the GCC is familiar with is restoration driven with the ice and the last people that were engaged, and the time that they were engaged pre- ice storm. Turner said the last time he walked the area with a few others and looked over the forest, came to the conclusion that it was restorative/corrected sort of driven so he (Turner) did not believe they were compromising anything in terms of value and potential with the state.

Hocker then asked Turner that if the GCC waited until mid-summer/fall or even longer than that, would that work? Turner felt that they could be more progressive in planning down the road and honestly it was pretty difficult to forecast the market and the revenue string is so marginal to begin with that luckily this was a publicly owned resource and he (Turner) felt that the nice part was the management of the property at this point. Turner said that maybe the August/September 2010 agenda for the GCC that maybe the GCC could get something focused at that time. Hocker said that he knew there was a plan laid out for activities and proceeded to ask other GCC members if they had any questions.

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Schotanus asked Turner if he had any estimate what size the cut might be if the GCC decided to go forward with this? Turner stated the nature of the law would certainly lend itself to be a larger scale harvest just because when you get into low grade products, the production scale is pretty important and drives management more towards the way our system is set up now with economy and scale, that the GCC would want somebody up there to treat more rather than less. Turner went on to discuss previous cut jobs that the Forestry Management has done here in Grantham. The GCC further discussed the issues at hand.

Flewelling Property actions:

Hocker said the on going discussion with the property that the GCC had discussed in past meetings to do with ongoing projects/culverts and that Schotanus suggested that he (Hocker) meet with the Blue Mountain Snowdusters. Hocker said he met with Don Holmes and Warren Legacy this past Wednesday and briefed them on what he felt they should be pursuing with the property in terms of activities. One of the topics was the footbridge across the old dam site that walkers/hikers and cross-country skiers can access the property instead of going up the driveway.

Hocker went on to read the conservation easement from Bruce Flewelling that allows the use of the bridge to the edge of the clearing, but no further. Hocker said there is a path that backs up the clearing to the lakeside, and that area is just on the boundary line of the reserved area and also runs directly down to the dam sight. Hocker said that if there was means to get across the dam site that would be a straight shot to Faye Road. Hocker stated that Legacy and Holmes suggested setting up the footbridge, but widened it, so that the snowmobiles etc could get through. Hocker also said that the site in the present condition would not support the bridge and more importantly Karen Partin and her brother agree to the process if it were technically feasible and hoped that ideas could be shared on this topic.

Turner stated that he had not been to the area in question in awhile and that if the GCC wanted him (Turner) to get engaged in this matter he suggested that Bruce Flewelling be contacted and made aware of what the GCC would like to do before doing any follow-up. Turner felt to proceed forward, which was being a big landowner and managing that, the key to that is having good neighborly relations. Hocker suggested to Turner by all means go ahead and do whatever was official, and in the best interest of the town. There was further discussion between the GCC members with ideas of possible “other” areas to enter from and possibly a smarter strategy. Turner stated he would be happy to explore “all” ideas with the property owner when he meets them if the GCC feels that this is prudent. The GCC members agreed.

Planning for Conservation Sub-Committee:

Hocker asked Schotanus if there was anything to report. Schotanus stated that he would contact Adele Furdyna to meet sometime within the next week and felt the committee

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was in the last stage of figuring out what the priorities should be. Schotanus said that hopefully by next May they would have a report for the commission to proceed with the critical lands index.

Frog Pond status:

Hocker stated that apparently since the last meeting nothing has materialized, and that he would be meeting with Town Administrator, Becky Newton later this week.

Shoreland Protection Ordinance status:

Hocker said at this time this project is in the hands of the Selectmen and that the ordinance gave the Selectmen the power, and whether or not they choose to use it is up to them. Hocker told the committee members this will be another topic he will discuss with Town Administrator, Becky Newton at there meeting this week.

Miscellaneous (Trust Fund):

Hocker stated that apparently what transpired with the auditors was acceptable, and what they said is that the Selectmen cannot be in “the loop”, this must be physically granted Hocker said and then read from the warrant article/ RSA 41:14-a to the committee members. Hocker stated that he would speak to Town Administrator, Becky Newton to see whether this will be put on the Town Warrant article for Town Meeting in March 2010 to be voted on for approval. There was further discussion with the committee on this subject.

Handouts

None

Adjournment

Hocker asked the members if anyone had any more questions. There being none motion by Merle Schotanus and second by Pat Woolson; ***the committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:53 p.m.***

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on February 15, 2010 in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha M. Menard
Clerk