

APPROVED

Town of Grantham Grantham Conservation Commission

MEETING MINUTES June 20, 2011

Chairman Richard L. Hocker called the Conservation Commission to order on Monday, June 20, 2011, at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Room at Grantham Town Hall located at 300 Route 10 South in Grantham, NH.

Present: Chairman Richard (Dick) Hocker; Merle Schotanus; Andy Eastman; Joe Watts (*Alternate*) and Kristina Burgard (*Alternate*).

Absent: Jeremy Turner; Lindsey Dixon

Members of the public: Town Administrator Becky Newton; Jeanie McIntire

ADMINISTRATIVE

Approval of Minutes for 18 April 2011 Meeting

Chair Hocker asked the Commission members if there were any additions/corrections/modification to be made to the draft minutes for the April 18, 2011 meeting. *With no corrections made a motion by Schotanus to approve and accept the April 18, 2011 Minutes as submitted; second by Eastman. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.*

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

NEW BUSINESS

Flewelling Brothers plaque placement

Chair Hocker reviewed the Flewelling Brothers request to place a plaque in memory of their parents along the road on town property near the black cherry tree which is about 30 feet from the bridge. The plaque is well made and could be easily removed if need be. Chair Hocker explained that the Flewelling Brothers are asking the Conservation Commission to support their request; in the end the selectmen will make the final decision.

A motion was made by Burgard to support and recommend to the Selectmen accepting the Flewelling's request for posting Flewelling's Memorial Plaque to be placed in the right of way closest to the bridge in Sherwood Forest; second by Watts.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

APPROVED

Appraisals on Hasting's properties 208-001 & 208-002

Chair Hocker stated that he sent all the Commission members an e-mail containing information regarding the proposal for appraisals on Karen Hasting's properties 208-001 & 208-002 and the quote relating thereto in the amount of \$2,500.00. Due to a change in priorities there is a desire to complete the proposals earlier than proposed. They could complete property 208-002 (a 97 acre parcel) by 18 July and then complete the second proposal 208-001 the following week.

A motion was made by Schotanus to approve the appraisal proposal; second by Burgard.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

OTHER BUSINESS

Forestry Services Agreement – Meadowsend Timberlands Ltd. – Jeremy Turner

Chair Hocker updated the Commission regarding the approved logging operation involving low-impact horse forestry that the Commission is responsible for in the Town Forest. Chair Hocker explained that he had checked in with Jeremy and found that they had not proceeded very far into that process and that the price for forest products are down again. This will be a continuing item at our upcoming meetings.

Land Acquisition – Status and Agreement discussion

Chair Hocker reemphasized the Commission's support for acquiring two of Karen Hastings properties 208-001 & 208-002. The general procedure is that each lot could be pursued independently, if necessary, once the allocated money is made available. Karen Hastings has expressed a strong desire that the both properties be acquired by the Town for conservation purposes, and that; if possible, she would like the larger parcel to be named after her late husband.

Chair Hocker explained that on June 8, 2011 he met with Town Administrator Becky Newton and Jeanie McIntire of Upper Valley Land Trust to discuss the possibilities of proceeding on the acquisition. The procedure that they agreed upon at that time was that the Conservation Commission in session would provide the necessary recommendations to support the Upper Valley Land Trust's acquisition and protection of the land.

Burgard stated that money related to purchasing property might be requested from the Land Preservation Capital Reserve Fund whose purpose is for the purchase of Grantham property deemed to be vital in conservation and preservation. Funds relating to stewardship would have to come from another source.

Burgard described the property as beautiful, with high elevations; it sits directly at the head waters of Stony Brook as well as Eastman Lake, and contains several different types of wetlands that provide important functions and values, such as sediment trapping and nutrient transformation, that are vital to water supply, water quality, and flood storage. The property is also very high quality wildlife habitat and plant habitat, and is contiguous to existing protected land. Chair Hocker stated that the Hobble bush up there is the thickest he has ever seen in Grantham, therefore makes for very good moose habitat.

APPROVED

Town Administrator Newton stated that during her meeting with McIntire, she was asked if the Town of Grantham wanted to own the property and the bigger question being who would own the property, would the Town of Grantham own it, with a Conservation easement held by UVLT or would UVLT own it and the Town would make a contribution to UVLT in relation to the purchase price.

Burgard noted that the Town adopted RSA 36-A:4-a, I(b) in connection with property located in Grantham by unanimous vote at the 2009 Town Meeting.

Town Administrator Newton explained that she had been trying to locate survey information, but to her knowledge, there has been no survey, so that would be an additional cost.

Schotanus stated that the property is listed in the wildlife CFA and has been identified by the Critical Conversation Land Index, so it lends credence to the CCLI in regards to Karen Hastings wish that it be named after Wilfred Hasting; Schotanus suggested naming the property “Wilfred Hastings Memorial Wildlife Area”. Chair Hocker explained that the naming of the property would be between the buyer and the seller.

Chair Hocker asked if there were any more questions, with no further questions *a motion was made by Burgard that the Conservation Commission advise the Board of Selectmen that Grantham property identified as Lot 208-002 serves a vital role in conservation and preservation of Town natural resources, and the Commission supports the Board of Selectmen’s withdrawal from the Land Preservation Capital Reserve Fund, after the deposit therein of \$100,000 authorized by 2011 Town Meeting Warrant Article 17, of up to \$ 60,000 to be used solely in connection with costs to purchase such property (including purchase price and related expenses, such as survey, title, and closing costs) for permanent conservation; seconded by Schotanus*

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

A motion was made by Schotanus that the Conservation Commission hold a public hearing with notice pursuant to RSA 675:7 regarding contributing \$10,000 from the Conservation Fund to the Upper Valley Land Trust for conservation management and stewardship in connection with protection of Grantham property identified as Lot 208-002 and contingent upon such hearing and purchase or imminent purchase of Grantham Lot 208-002 for conservation purposes, approve contributing \$10,000 to the Upper Valley Land Trust to endow conservation management and stewardship of this property; seconded by Burgard.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

Planning for Conservation –

Continue Planning for Wetlands Inventory project – Next steps

Chair Hocker turned the floor over to Schotanus. Schotanus reads an e-mail he received earlier today from Dr. Rick Van de Poll explaining that the mapping has been completed, and on June 3, 2011 all the road side surveys were finished so now Rick has a pretty clear idea what is out there.

APPROVED

Rick has also talked with several land owners out there about the project, as well as the police chief, Rick was able to identify high value wetland complex's but other than the main lake or pond associated with wet lands complexes. Breaking this apart has proven to be a little difficult, especially in Eastman, where many are connected in some way by perennial streams with passable culverts or bridges. There will be some decisions that need to be discussed such as how far up stream should we include the Bog Brook complex but for the most part each system can be confirmed fairly easily.

Rick asked in his e-mail if the Prime Wetlands Committee if they could meet with him June 28, 2011 after work to look over some maps so then he could make the final decisions about breaking out the wet land complexes. The Commission agreed to meet with Rick on June 28, 2011 at 6pm.

Schotanus has been exploring the possibilities of doing a survey asking the Town's people what their values are in terms of protecting open spaces, since this will be critical to the final outcome of any open space protection plan that is agreed upon a year or so from now.

Schotanus stated that at an earlier meeting he had asked the Commission to think about the possibilities of four or five volunteers who might serve on a committee that would be able to take on this project that would be separate from the Conservation Commission and separate from the Board of Selectmen.

Schotanus defined "open space" as any property that is not built on.

Burgard asked if she and Watts should be working on the second landowner access letter draft for June 28, 2011.

Shoreland Protection – Grantham Status

Chair Hocker stated that the current status is that the agency responsible for forming the subcommittee to address proposing criteria for local Shoreland Protection requests is the Planning Board. Chair Hocker explained Charlie McCarthy has expressed an interest to be part of that subcommittee. Chair Hocker has volunteered to represent Conservation and as soon as the committee is formed they can start coming up with the procedures and role for the Town of Grantham. Schotanus asked if this committee would result in an established procedure; Town Administrator Newton expressed hopes of the committee establishing an application for CFPA permit on areas that are regulated by Town Ordinance.

Schotanus asked if the Conservation Commission would have some representation on the Planning Board. Town Administration Newton stated that she could not answer that, but at this time there are some concerns from the Select Board regarding that request. Schotanus suggested that they allow for ex-officio member without vote. Newton stated that the ex-officio member have to be fully voting members and that therefore the size of the Planning Board would have to go from five to seven members. Burgard noted that NH statutes provide that one Conservation Commission member can actually simultaneously serve as a full member of the Planning Board, and thus the Select Board can appoint a Conservation Commission when a position is vacated.

APPROVED

Schotanus suggested that the Select Board look into the Town of New Loudon, as they have been absolutely successful getting cooperation between the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission. They started this by putting a Conservation Commission member on the Planning Board as an ex officio member without vote and later made that member a full voting member and as a result the Planning decisions have been very credible.

HAND OUTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Hocker asked if there were any further business. There being none, Eastman moved to adjourn, and Watts seconded the motion.

The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:15 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on July 18, 2011, in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Smith

Grantham Conservation Commission, Clerk