

Cornish Conservation Commission

Minutes of Wednesday, February 11, 2009, Unapproved

Present: Loel Callahan, Linda Fuerst, Bill Gallagher (Chair), Mariet Jaarsma, Betty Miller, Frank Parks, Don Snowden, Jon Woodhull

Minutes: Jon made a motion to approve the minutes of December 17, January 14, and January 28. Linda seconded and the vote was in the affirmative.

Conservation Funding: Most of the meeting involved discussion of various scenarios for funding the Conservation Fund.

Conservation Award: The Commission made a decision on this year's recipient.

Mail/Announcements:

- Mariet will organize Green Up weeks and will communicate with Nancy about Town Meeting
- A donation of \$50 was received
- Need to write letter of support to UVLT regarding Mastlands
- Letter from DES regarding possible violation (fill in wetlands) on Ed and Bonnie Jones property
- Betty ordered a copy of the Handbook for NH's Municipal Conservation Commissions. Loel moved to pay \$18 to the NHACC. Jon seconded and the motion passed.
- The Selectboard will appoint Betty Caterino and Michael Meeks as alternates, but not Jenny Schad as she's busy with other town business.
- Linda donated the bulletin board used in the display she recently created
- Don received a call from a reporter from the Eagle Times about the totem pole
- Snowshoe celebration this Sunday at the Fitches

Adjournment: Frank moved to adjourn at 9:25. Jon seconded and the motion passed. Next meeting is February 25.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Miller

Cornish Conservation Commission

Minutes of the Public Hearing of Wednesday, January 28, 2009, Unapproved

Conservation Commission Members Present – Loel Callahan, Linda Fuerst, Bill Gallagher, John Hammond, Mariet Jaarsma, Betty Miller, Frank Parks, Rickey Poor, and Jon Woodhull

Members of the Public – Ben Bulkeley, Betty Caterino, Bill Caterino, Sara Cavin, Bud Fitch, Jim Fitch, Sue Fitch, Mike Fuerst, Robert Jaarsma, Ron Johnson, Buz Lord, Jan Lord, Beth Lum, Peg Merrens, Doug Miller, Jenny Schad, Caroline Storrs, Peter Storrs, Sally Wellborn, Dean Zoerheide, and Martha Zoerheide

Bill Gallagher called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. Peg Merrens and Sara Cavin of the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT) provided background information on the pending conservation easements of the Fitch Farm and East Woods parcel. UVLT has received a grant of \$167,500

from the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) which requires a local match. The Fitches have donated a substantial portion and the Conservation Commission wishes to use \$75,513 from the Conservation Fund. The properties are located in a federal and state conservation priority area and are also consistent with regional and local conservation priorities. Peg and Sara described various types of easements, management and stewardship costs, and the benefits of this project to the town.

Bill opened the meeting for public input. Questions and comments addressed the following topics:

- How much money is in the Conservation Fund and where does it come from? About \$135,000; from change of use tax, annual appropriations, donations, and interest
- Thanks expressed to UVLT, the Conservation Commission, and to the Fitches
- Approximately 10% of the land in Cornish is protected
- Comments from 6 individuals unable to come to the meeting were read (all in support of the project)
- The public is encouraged to walk (snowshoe, ski) on the East Woods land
- The money coming into the Conservation Fund from the Land Use Change Tax helps offset development in town by dedicating that revenue to conservation projects
- Breakdown of the costs (percentage vs dollar amounts)
- The view from the Fitch property is remarkable; glad to have that protected
- Cornish is a great town; so many people have contributed to maintain its rural character
- Recognition that the Fitch property connects to other large conserved properties
- This action does not require town vote; Conservation Commission decides
- Maps, posters, handouts provided to answer questions about conservation
- Does Conservation Commission deal with water issues too? Yes

The public hearing closed and the Conservation Commission then met to consider the testimony of the public hearing. Betty made a motion that the Conservation Commission withdraw \$75,513 from the Conservation Fund and donate said amount to the Upper Valley Land Trust for the joint purpose of securing a conservation easement on the Fitch Farm and the East Woods parcel, said easements to be held by the Upper Valley Land Trust. Frank seconded and the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

The Commission discussed Land Use Change Tax and the annual appropriation to the Conservation Fund. A new project was presented – the Mastlands on Route 12A, which has a good chance to receive funding from the National Scenic Byways Program (local match required).

Jon moved to adjourn at 9:10; Mariet seconded and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Miller