

**Minutes of the Peterborough Conservation Commission Meeting
November 17, 2011, Town House Peterborough, 7 p.m.**

Present: Swift Corwin, John Kerrick, Matt Lundsted, John Patterson, Robert Wood, Susan Stanbury, Francie Von Mertens;
Open Space Committee members Alan Bannister, Ed Henault, Debby Kaiser, Eric Thum; Martha Twombly from the Forest Society; Julie Perron.

Mount Monadnock / Forest Society land conservation project

October's minutes were approved as written as was \$2,000 easement support funding to the Harris Center for the Eastman conservation easement (funding approved by Conservation Commission vote on 1/28/10; easement recently finalized).

Martha Twombly presented a slide show on the Forest Society's land conservation project to purchase the Stowell property (335 acres in Marlborough and Jaffrey) that contains part of the Marlboro Trail up Mount Monadnock; and purchase of a conservation easement on the Royce property (56 acres in Jaffrey). Fundraising goal is \$760,000 with \$120,000 in hand.

Historically the Forest Society has led efforts to conserve Mount Monadnock, now at over 5,000 acres of protected land.

Martha Twombly also spoke about other regional conservation projects that are Forest Society focus areas.

ConCom and Open Space members helped brainstorm the fundraising process including an art auction featuring Mt. Monadnock paintings/artwork.

Open Space Committee

Chair Ed Henault talked about current land conservation in town, passing out an updated open space map as well as an updated list of properties conserved. He said the current year was likely to be the best year in town history for land conservation (Eastman easement, Otter Brook Phase II, a third easement in process with the Monadnock Conservancy). Going forward, he said that the committee has a particular interest in agriculture resources—reflecting a concern in the broader land conservation movement about conserving ag land, highly developable, before it is lost to development.

Also reflecting a concern in the broader movement is an interest in getting people up and out on local trails and conserved land. It was agreed that the trend is going the other way (fewer hunters, anglers, etc.). Henault pointed out that past outings offered by the Open Space Committee tended to attract the same people who already are committed outdoorspeople. Outreach continues to be a challenge.

Joint sponsorship of outings (workgangs, field trips, naturalist presentations) was discussed with no conclusions reached other than the need for novelty that might attract people not otherwise inclined to get up and out (ex.: geo-caching).

Francie Von Mertens said Dick Ober's keynote address at the recent NHACC conference focused on the potential of land conservation and conserved land as a community builder in a time when community is more likely to be fractured than strengthened, and at a time when increasing indoors habits were threatening general health.

Robert Wood suggested the ConCom trails map be reconfigured as a poster. Swift Corwin suggested there be a featured Trail of the Month, with Jim Jenkins's articles as a possible assist.

Vernal pools project

John Patterson reported that Brett Thelen would hear soon if the intern she's eager to hire can take on the project. His request for known vernal pools in town resulted in the beginnings of a list. More are needed.

Summer Street town parcel

Corwin and John Kerrick visited the quarter-acre lot to assess whether the town should keep it or offer it to abutters. Corwin said it abuts town property to the north, along the bike trail route and has a history of being considered for a bridge across the Contoocook as traffic bypass for the Library Corner bridge project.

Matt Lunsted said that given shoreland's ecological value, the town should hold on to it. (Note: the Contoocook is one of 16 designated rivers in the state protected under the Rivers Management and Protection Act).

John Kerrick will write a memo to the Select Board with that conclusion.

Long Hill Estates conservation easement

Corwin and Kerrick visited the easement property and determined that the top-of-the-bank property boundary was marked and no excavation had encroached at that point. The town's role in determining the slope easement and further encroachment that does not impact the property boundary is unclear. The conservation easement language makes no mention of the slope easement. Evidently that agreement is between the sandpit operator and Long Hill Estates.

John Kerrick will meet with Carol Ogilvie to go over the slope easement documents that are in the easement baseline folder, perhaps with the goal of a meeting with Long Hill Estates board representative to clarify responsibilities of the various parties.

2011 Easement monitoring

Susan Stanbury reported that seven easements have been monitored, with 13 to go in the next month and a half.

To discuss at the December meeting: assigning the Walcott easement to the Harris Center with easement support funding.

/fvm