

**Minutes of the Peterborough Conservation Commission Meeting  
September 22, 2011, Town House Peterborough, 7 p.m.**

Present: Jo Anne Carr, Bryn Dumas, Swift Corwin, John Patterson, Susan Stanbury,  
Francie Von Mertens, Robert Wood  
Guest: Dick Estes, Brett Thelan

August ConCom minutes were approved.

**Budget**

The Eastman conservation easement to be held by the Harris Center is about to be signed (40 Ac / High Street opposite MacDowell Colony). The \$2,000 support funding from the ConCom's Land Acquisition and Management Fund approved January 2010 will be forwarded upon the signing. Current balance in that fund is \$104,648. Current Use Tax addition to the fund this past year was \$5,510.

**Comercial water extraction**

Von Mertens spoke briefly about four towns in the state that have passed ordinances banning/restricting commercial extraction of water. It was an issue that brought those towns together, a welcome occurence in these partisan times. It was agreed that the Water Resources Subcommittee and Planning Board were the entities to take leadership role in pursuing the matter, with possible ConCom support.

Von Mertens will continue to pursue the subject with those entities.

**Vernal Pool Project / AVEO**

Brett Thelen from the Ashuelot Valley Environmental Observatory presented the vernal pool mapping project AVEO is doing in Keene. AVEO now is part of the Harris Center. To be determined is whether Peterborough would do a similar study.

The project's mapping component involves identifying likely vernal pools through aerial photos and/or stereoscopic analysis. Ground-truthing takes place in May (searching for obligate VP species: fairy shrimp, wood frogs, spotted and Jefferson salamanders). Training of volunteers takes place before ground-truthing.

In Keene, town conservation land was mapped, and some conservation easement properties will be mapped if the landowners wish to participate. The project is ongoing.

Brett/AVEO has run several training sessions in Keene. More people have taken the training than have gone out in the field, but that's an expected part of the project's education function.

In response to questions, Brett said that most VPs are not wetlands, so there is no protection given them in New Hampshire. Brett said that Massachusetts protects VPs that have been documented and certified (100-foot buffer).

Goal of the VP project is education about the importance of VPs, including landowner education with goal that buffers are voluntarily respected.

ConCom members discussed partnering with AVEO and the Harris Center on the project and agreed it has good merit. Consensus was that town conservation lands were a logical place to start perhaps with one demonstration property as part of the

training. If an Antioch intern can be enlisted mapping could be wider to fully engage the intern.

Brett will pursue an Antioch intern. ConCom agreed that a stipend was appropriate for the intern.

Brett and John Patterson will meet with Fash in Office of Community Development to discuss the project and determine OCD's level of assistance. Ideally, it was agreed, an intern would work with Fash/OCD.

### **Agway / Wetlands buffer**

Robert Wood will follow-up on addressing possible buffer issues.

### **Workgang**

Concord Correctional Institute workgang returns to town the week of October 3. The goal is preparing the Elm Street Harris Center lot for more brush hauling and burning. Von Mertens is pursuing permission to have a daytime burn at the site with Fire Department oversight. ConCom members are encouraged to stop by that week and lend a hand.

It was agreed that the next CCI workgang will focus on the Burke Road field.

### **Country Club property**

With sale of the Monadnock Country Club to the Town in the news and an upcoming public hearing on the subject, ConCom discussed the matter. Agreement was reached that the existing use as a golf course and function venue (Rotary/wedding/etc.) adds value to the town.

Given its proximity to the downtown, and the Master Plan's stated goals that future development be encouraged close to existing centers rather than in outlying areas, members agreed that conservation goals were not appropriate for the ConCom to pursue.

The property's location upgrade from the town's water supply was noted.

If the Select Board requests ConCom input, the subject merits further attention.

Members were encouraged to attend the September 27, 6 p.m. public hearing.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting is Thursday, October 20, 2011.