



Received for Record
September 6, 2012
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Town Clerk

Approved meeting minutes
Huntington Conservation Commission (HCC)
July 12, 2012

Meeting duration: 7:15pm to 9:08pm

Commissioners present: Jim Sadler, Cindy Sprague (facilitator), Roman Livak, JB Bryan, Margaret Fowle

Meeting called to order at 7:15pm

Minutes approved from 6/21/12

Guest **Bob Heiser** from the Vermont Land trust spoke to the committee about the conservation easement (CE) process in Huntington and other towns, and specifically about the Hennessey & Whiting parcel (H&W) on Carse road. Heiser stated that B&W wished to sell the development rights to 136 acres contiguous to one of the largest forest blocks in the state. \$35,000 is needed from the Conservation Fund. H&W will donate \$185,000 of value.

Roman stated that there are only four parcels in the town under CE; Hardy/Brent, Taft/Brace, Reynolds/Homans, and Palola/McSweeney.

Cindy asked about public access, and Bob said it could be tailored to the towns wishes.

Discussion of the terms that H&W was proposing (available in handout)

Roman asked if there is a loss to tax roll, and Bob said probably, but how much was up to listers and the state's assigned value after lister's appraisal.

Cindy asked if there are any covenants, and both Roman and Bob said no, but that H&W allowed for dispersal access on the land, and that the approach trail to the Long Trail was protected by Green Mtn. Club.

Discussion next centered on the financial aspects of the deal (available on handout)

Value of the land: \$826,900 listed, minus \$269,000 for current use. Vermont Land Trust (VLT) estimates value will be \$460,000, because the easement is permanent, and there is an option to buy at agricultural values (for starting farmers). Bob said there won't be a decrease in land value for educational taxes.

H&W will leverage this land for the Andrews Farm in Richmond which they will keep in agriculture.

JB asked if the VLT doesn't get enough money will they continue, Bob said no, but the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB) will probably approve the \$235,000 because the land butts up to Camels Hump state park. Cindy asked if approval of the grant by VHCB was contingent on other sources coming through and Bob said yes, without our approval its a no go.

Cindy asked if the HCC donates the money, will we have any control over the land? Bob; no, but we can have input in the document.

Bob left at 8:15pm.

Heidi Racht arrived for public comment to discuss the Wild Parsnip eradication effort. Stated that Yogi was going to leave a truck out on Tues. 7/17 for people to dump the parsnip stalks. Heidi asked for some help pulling the weeds from the committee, and discussed how we could publicise the effort.

Discussion centered on how the town might budget for this and other invasive species in the future. Roman said we will need to get something in the town budget as either more money for road crew to mow, or hire a subcontractor. Also suggested a response for invasive species get put on the Town Plan

Heidi left at 8:30.

Ongoing projects:

Margaret brought up the issue of a permanent chair or co-chair for the CC. Important that people have point person to go to for any issues. Cindy and Margeret discussed and agreed to be co-chairs till Town Meeting day in 2013. Roman proposed, JB seconded, Passed.

Garrison Hill Wrap up:

Cindy; How do we target new parcels?

Roman: Make it part of estate planning

Jim: Need to prioritize area criteria

Margaret: There's a book for ranking land, but is very subjective. Suggested we shelve setting criteria for another time.

New Members:

Jim has been reaching out to new members, and Cindy and Margaret suggested another posting on Front Porch Forum and in the stores.

Andrea Oglivie arrived at 8:55 to repeat Heidi's talk.

Special Meeting:

Cindy asked about a meeting time to discuss VLT application once it was finished. Roman said we needed time to discuss it and get our finding off to Select Board before Bob Heiser goes up before the VHCB hearing on September 20, 2012. Proposed special meeting on 7/26, which we all agreed to.

Roman motioned meeting adjourned, Cindy seconded; meeting adjourned 9:08.

Next regular meeting 8/23.

Minutes of July 12, 2012

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