



TOWN OF HUDSON

Conservation Commission



Ken Dickinson, Chairman

Marilyn McGrath, Selectmen Liaison

12 School Street • Hudson, New Hampshire 03051 • Tel: 603-886-6008 • Fax: 603-816-1291

DATE: January 11, 2016

MEETING MINUTES: Below is a listing of minutes for the Hudson Conservation Commission. Minutes are not a verbatim record of each meeting, but rather represent a summary of the discussion and actions taken at the meeting. All Conservation Commission meetings are televised live and repeated during the following week on HCTV, cable television channel 22. Official copies of the minutes are available to read and copy at the Town Engineer's Office during regular business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.).

Should you have any questions concerning these minutes or wish to see the original recording, please contact the Town Engineer's Office at 603-886-6008.

A regular meeting of the Hudson Conservation Commission (HCC) was held in the Community Development Conference Room of Town Hall.

Members of the Commission present: J. Battis, W. Collins, K. Dickinson, R. Matos and M. Tranfaglia

Members of the Commission absent: R. Brownrigg, excused

Member of Town Staff: None

Board of Selectman Representative: Selectman Marilyn McGrath

Seating of Alternates: None

Called to Order at 07:15 p.m.

As no members of the public were in attendance, no public input was presented or discussed.

I. OLD BUSINESS

None

II. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Ryan Young from the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) and Bill and Lavinia Miller: Farm land conservation opportunity.

Reference town tax maps 135-017-000, 126-034-000 and 126-032-000

Mr. Young from the SPNHF gave a presentation to commission members for a potential land conservation opportunity of property owned by Bill and Lavinia Miller. The property which is located along Griffin Road abuts the Ingersoll land which is already under stewardship of SPNHF. Mr. Young described his roll with the SPNHF and how the organization was approached by the Millers with the idea that the land could be placed into some kind of conservation stewardship program. Mr. Young then introduced Bill and Lavinia Miller to the commission so they could give a brief description and history of the property. Mr. Miller said that the property was originally called the Baker Farm, established in 1870 and that it's been in the family for 150 years. Mr. Miller said that it was becoming difficult to continue with upkeep of the property and that the family preferred to see some kind of conservation commitment of the land rather than development. At the end of Mr. Millers presentation Mr. Young added that the property had various components that the SPNHF looks for such as open space, a forestry component and a strong and well established wetland area. Mr. Young asked if there were any questions from the commission.

Mr. Matos asked Mr. Young what his roll was in regards to this proposal. Mr. Young said that he is representing the SPNHF in the matter and not representing Mr. and Mrs. Miller. Mr. Young stated that as a SPNHF representative he is constantly seeking out new conservation opportunity across the state. He also stated that it was in this particular case the society has an existing tract of abutting property.

Mr. Battis asked how much of the Miller property is in easement today? Mr. Miller estimated approximately 20 acres. Mr. Miller added that the easements were for utility maintenance which took place every few years.

Mr. Young said at this point in the process it was unclear as to whether an outright purchase of the property or some kind of conservation agreement would best suit the Millers and pointed out getting appraisal of the property's value would be a good first step.

Mr. Collins asked if the Millers were currently being paid for any of the existing utility easements on their property. Mrs. Miller said that the family was not receiving any money from the utility easements.

Selectman McGrath asked for more detail about the wetlands located on the property. Referring to the map hand out Mr. Millers described some of the more prominent wetland features and locations on the property. Mrs. Miller pointed out that there was a small stream running through the property and also a vernal pool.

Mr. Battis asked if there were any threatened or protected species ever noticed on the property. Mr. Young and the Millers both could not recall seeing any animals that fell into the category of endangered or protected.

Mr. Dickinson polled the commission to see if there would be an interest in a site walk of the property. Mr. Young added that he would be happy to join the commission members to answer questions during the walk.

A site walk scheduled for Sunday, January 31, 2016 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Dickinson asked how the appraisal would be paid. Mr. Young said some monies could be raised from the SPNHF to cover some costs associated with the appraisal and added that the rest of the required funds would need to come from other sources.

Mr. Matos asked if any environmental impact studies would be required if there were a true interest in pursuing this opportunity.

Mr. Battis went over some of steps that would be needed if a grant was sought out to aid in the purchase of the property.

Selectman McGrath asked for a more definitive explanation as to what was being considered. She asked what are the Millers seeking monetarily and who would pay for it?

Mr. Young said once a price was figured out for the value of the property negotiations could take place with Millers and that knowing the value would help in determining if an outright purchase could be made or a land conservation easement would be a better choice. He said that there were land grants and other programs available that could help defray the cost. Mr. Young added that it would be most helpful if the town of Hudson participated in this endeavor.

Selectman McGrath asked Mr. Young if the SPNHF owned the property would they place any restrictions on it. Mr. Young said no and that the property would be open to the public for passive recreation. He also gave a few examples of what would be permitted uses on the properties.

Mr. Dickinson made an observation that this property would more than likely be merged with the abutting Ingersoll property. He asked what the current status of the Ingersoll was in terms of ownership. Mr. Young said the majority of the Ingersoll property was owned by the SPNHF as outlined on the map handout.

Mr. Young pointed out that the Millers would retain a certain amount of acreage for their residence and that the final amount of property would have to be subdivided out with the remaining property being converted to conserved land.

Mr. Dickinson asked if there were any historic buildings on the property. The Millers referred to a foundation as historical but did not specify what the foundation was part of.

Mr. Dickinson said there could be some concerns over the location of the property and the existing proposals for future projects along that corridor of the town but added it would be best to view the property first hand before making any decisions.

In closing the Millers said that Land for Good, an organization out Keene had analyzed the soils on the property and told the Millers that they were of significant importance.

Mr. Dickinson thanked Mr. Young and Mr. and Mrs. Miller for their presentations to the commission.

III. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Election of officers.

A motion was made to nominate Ken Dickinson for the position of Chairman of the Hudson Conservation Commission for the 2016 calendar year.

Motion by: W. Collins

Seconded by: Mr. Tranfaglia

Vote: For: 4 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

A motion was made to nominate James Battis for the position of Vice Chairman of the Hudson Conservation Commission for the 2016 calendar year.

Motion by: W. Collins

Seconded by: R. Matos

Vote: For: 4 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

A motion was made to nominate William Collins for the position of Secretary of the Hudson Conservation Commission for the 2016 calendar year.

Motion by: J. Battis

Seconded by: M. Tranfaglia

Vote: For: 4 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

B. Timber inventory or trail work day at the town forest.

A trail work day or timber inventory at the Town Forest was scheduled for February 20, 2016 at 1:00 p.m.

Discussion took place on the possibility of creating habitat for the New England Cottontail rabbit.

C. Kiosk rules signage.

Mr. Dickinson reported that he did not have a chance to hang the new town forest trail map but added that the town selectmen have formally approved all the chosen trails names.

Mr. Battis informed the commission members that Lisa Newt had put up a new page on the conservation commission website showing the new Musquash and Town Forest trail maps. Mr. Battis also said he would arrange to have the new Musquash Trail map installed in the kiosk located at the Musquash Pond.

Mr. Dickinson asked if commission members had a chance to look at some of the examples he provided on Land Usage signs. The signs once finalized and accepted by the commission will be posted at town owned conservation properties alerting the public as to acceptable uses of town owned of land.

Some discussion took place as to what the sign should contain but no definitive wording was formalized. Other ideas such as sign placement, type and size were discussed. At the conclusion of the discussion Mr. Matos said he would be happy to get quotes on costs and would try to have something to present to the commission at the next scheduled meeting.

IV. FINANCIAL STATUS

No outstanding financial issues were discussed.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Battis reviewed the current correspondence information addressed to the HCC. The first item was an open invitation to conservation members to attend a seminar in Amherst Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. The seminar will provide information on invasive species currently affecting Hemlock trees in New Hampshire and throughout New England.

A news letter from NHDES concerning water quality and private well testing was mentioned.

Some other correspondences concerning things happening around the state was included in the packet.

Finally, Mr. Battis said he had presented his cost analysis on invasive species control to the board of selectman.

Then conservation commission annual report for 2015 was mentioned, no corrections or additional input was provided by commission members.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Previous Conservation Commission minutes for December 14, 2015 were submitted for approval.

Motion made to approve Conservation Commission meeting minutes held on the following date: December 14, 2015

Motion by: Mr. Battis
Seconded by: Mr. Tranfaglia

Vote: For: 5 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

VII. COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

None

Motion to adjourn:

Motion by: Mr. Tranfaglia
Seconded by: Mr. Collins

Vote: For: 5 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Meeting Adjourned at 8:58 p.m.



Ken Dickinson, Chairman