

PEMBROKE CONSERVATION COMMISSION (CC) MEETING
Approved Minutes of July 9, 2007

Attendance

Present

Members: Lea Anne Atwell, Secretary; Carol Bertsimas, Vice-Chair; Kevin Gagne; Ammy Heiser, Chair; Stetson Heiser, Todd Terrien, Planning Board (PB) Representative; Brian Tufts, Board of Selectmen (BOS) Representative; and Ayn Whytemare.

Alternate Members: David Baril

Other: Laura Scott, Planning Director

Not present: Jeff Abbe

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Ammy Heiser at 7:05 pm.

2. **Current Conservation Land**

a. **Scripture Conservation Easement – Review/Amend Draft Timeline**

Mala Tyler, one of the property owners, was present. Laura provided a draft timeline for proposing a warrant article at next year's Town Meeting to amend the easement on the Scripture property. Laura pointed out that she could find no record in the CC minutes of who would incur costs with the legal work, survey, and registering the deed. CC members recalled having previously discussed the costs and recalled that some members had previously suggested that the CC should pay for these costs, because the easement was accepted by the Town in its current state. Laura added that legal counsel should review the proposed easement before Town Meeting.

Ayn made a motion to pay for legal work, survey, and changing the deed. Discussion took place regarding the motion. The question was raised as to whether we would be able to use money from the Conservation Fund to pay these costs. According to the Conservation Fund Use Policy, funds can be used for maintenance and activities, including surveying and legal costs. These funds can be used for existing lands, not just new lands. We would need a new survey, because we would need to take out the house, which would have been included in any older survey. Any costs over \$5,000 would require a public hearing.

Discussion took place about the option to have the land posted for no public use.

At the August 13th meeting, the CC will review the existing easement language. We will conduct a site visit before the August 13th meeting and will meet at 6 pm to conduct the Site visit. The motion was not properly revisited. We will revisit the issue after the Site walk.

b. **White Sands – Review/ Amend Draft Plan and Timeline**

Laura provided a draft plan that depicted areas for parking and where boulders should be placed. The gate would be placed across the road at the natural "pinch area" where the road was slightly narrower and a small hill is present. We will need to do some grading

and place gravel in the new parking area. Laura got an estimate of \$3,500 for the Highway Dept. to do the work. The Highway Department will haul and place the boulders free of charge. They would place the signs as well.

Discussion took place about the list of proposed allowed uses. All of the generally allowed uses as listed in the CC's Public Use Policy should be allowed. Snowmobiles do not currently use White Sands, they would need to contact PSNH, who owns the road. Eventually, the Town will have a joint use agreement with PSNH. They will be a part of the public hearing as well.

The CC cannot post any signs along the road, as it does not belong to the Town. We cannot close the road until we have an alternate parking area. We should add BOS, Planning Board, and Recreation Commission to the list of people to contact for comments. The CC will hold a public hearing on August 13, 2007 for the White Sands Conservation Area regarding allowed uses, site plan, and expenditure of conservation fund monies. The newspapers will get copies of the public hearing notice.

Steve Eisenberg, member of the public, indicated that there is always lots of trash at White Sands. The CC indicated that is the reason we will close the road to vehicular traffic.

Kevin is excused at 8 pm. David will vote for Kevin.

c. Property monitoring status update

Ayn indicated that her nephew is a boy scout and that the boy scouts are always looking for community service work. Ayn will invite someone from his troop to the next meeting to talk about opportunities. Laura will that to the agenda for the next meeting. Concern was expressed over them doing the entire easement monitoring. The full monitoring should be conducted by members of the CC. Perhaps the boy scouts could do brochures, clean up, trails, locate boundaries, put up flagging, etc.

CC members are working to conduct monitoring on all of the properties. If four or more CC members are present at a monitoring, it needs to be posted as a meeting and minutes need to be taken. Steve Eisenberg, a resident present at the meeting, expressed interest in conducting monitoring, and CC members should contact him if they need additional people to assist with monitoring.

3. Meeting Minutes – Review and Adopt

- a. June 3, 2007 – Todd made a motion to accept. Stetson seconded. All in favor.
- b. June 11, 2007 – Revisions include changes to names, Todd didn't step down, change language on last page. Carol made a motion to accept as amended. Stetson seconded. All in favor.
- c. June 25, 2007 – The following changes should be made - changes to list of attendees, add language to item 2, easement is on Buck Street, not on Glass Street. Ayn made a motion to accept as amended. Carol seconded. All in favor.

4. Third Range Road Class VI to Class V BOS Follow-Up

Approximately 20 people showed up to the site walk. Many people concerned about structural stability of Beacon Hill Road. Other range road residents showed up to voice concerns over development. Ayn saw good ecological diversity – ferns, trees, wetland species.

This matter will come to the BOS on July 18th. The BOS is only concerned about the road issues, and all other issues would be addressed by PB. If the proposal is approved and goes to the PB, the CC should be present at any PB meetings. The applicant could also build a road on his own property.

5. Miscellaneous – June 29th Budget Update – A copy was provided in our packets.

6. Proactive Land Identification for Possible Conservation Acquisition

a. Review / amend draft property owner letter and material

b. Review / amend list of identified land

Laura reviewed our list of property that we had identified at our last meeting. Over half of them were not useful for conservation properties, as they already had structures or are zoned for commercial use. The easiest properties would be the ones that are currently vacant, so we should target vacant land first. Laura provided tax cards and tax maps for some of the properties we had identified. Ammy will take the information to make a first pass.

Ayn suggested that the CC run this endeavor as a land acquisition drive and provided the CC with a list of steps for a strategy, as well as a revised letter to send to land owners. She suggested taking a more direct approach. Some of her suggestions included having a workshop on easements and fact sheets / information on easements and purchasing conservation land.

Laura suggested being cautious when approaching people initially. Our first approach should be a soft approach. We should not mention that we have money, as this is not a good reason for people to be interested in having their land be in conservation. Also, we shouldn't mention any potential tax breaks. We do not want to provide too much information in our first contact with people. The CC should write the letter, and should have one point of contact. If anyone is interested, we should invite them to a meeting, so that everything is in the minutes. We do not want landowners to assume that one CC member they are speaking with is speaking on behalf of the CC.

Discussion took place about combining Laura and Ayn's letters. Laura will incorporate some of Ayn's points into the draft letter. Brian suggested include a self-addressed stamped reply card with the letter. We should ask if people would be interested in attending a conservation easement workshop.

7. Adjournment

Todd made a motion to adjourn. Stetson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Lea Anne Atwell, CC Secretary