

**Minutes, Atkinson Conservation Commission
Monday, March 7th, 2005 at 7:30
Atkinson Town Hall**

Call To Order by Chairman Scott Kukshel at 7:35.

Attending:

Tim Dziechowski
Carole Hall
Scott Kukshel
Pete McVay
Michelle Veasey
Paul Wainwright

Guest Business and Plan Reviews:

June Travis of the Garden Club: The Garden Club has a natural wildflower garden project and is looking for the advice of the Conservation Commission if lands are available in the town for this project. Partially funded by the NH Fish and Game Commission, the project is to create a natural wildlife and wildflower garden in the town, with the work done by the Junior Garden Club under the supervision of the Garden Club. The purpose is to educate residents of Atkinson on native plants, and to show productivity. It would be an ongoing project.

Commission members were unanimously in approval of the project and discussed several possible conservation lands that could be used for this purpose: the Community Center pond bank, Marshall lands, Sawyer land, and Slade lands were all mentioned. The consensus of the Garden Club representatives and the board was that the Community Center pond area was the most suitable. The Conservation Commission would have to give approval, which would go to the selectmen for final approval. The next meeting of the Garden Club is Monday, April 4th, and a final garden design is planned by the Juniors by mid-April.

Francine Graves has been to the Planning Board with a proposal for a non-motorized path in Atkinson, similar to the biking and riding trails in other towns. In discussions with Ted Stewart, she discovered that there was a partial biking trail in town on Academy Avenue. She has also discussed plans with the NH Trails Association and NHDOT and is looking for grant money. The Conservation Commission supported the trail idea and suggested researching town tax maps and deeds for linkages across roads, connecting existing trails.

Ted Stewart discussed a prior sidewalks warrant article. There was a grant submitted for a biking trail that was never followed up by the town. Ted is willing to go to the town meeting to look for a matching grant to complete this proposal to start work on a non-motorized path, which was coincidentally part of what Francine Graves was enquiring about. The proposed bike path would be from Sawmill to Oak Ridge to Pope Road, and from Academy Avenue from the Police Station to the Library. This would be part of a ten-year plan, and would have to be approved by the Selectmen if the proposal is to stay active in the State system.

Internal Business

Secretary report: The minutes for January and February are still in draft form.

Treasurer's report: There were no expenses in February.

Other Dredge and Fills / Site Walks / Complaints

Bittersweet Farm (Fred D'Urso): Scott read from letters received from the Massachusetts Haverhill Conservation Commission, where fines may be issued to Mr. D'Urso for unauthorized woodland clearance. Scott will write a letter to the NH DES to see if there are any New Hampshire violations.

Lewis Builders (Harold Morse, Peter Lewis): presented a request for variance for land development off Route 111, abutting the small fire pond on Hall Farm Road. Discussion by the Conservation Commission was that the plans presented were not clear. Action was tabled pending a site walk by Commission members.

Landry of Bittersweet Lane: Scott read a letter written February 10th concerning the variance and wetland.

LaValle in King's Grant: variance requested closer to a smaller pocketed wetland. This was not considered as significant as the Stewart Farm Pond Wetland. No action taken.

Chambers on Main Street: had an expedited minimum impact request, but no representative was present at the meeting. The request is for a driveway across a wetland area for access to non-wetland area behind the main road. The state restricts the building access area to a narrow zone and there is no other place to put the road. There was not enough information to evaluate the plans, and action was tabled pending a site walk by Conservation members. Tim will contact LaValle to tell him we did not approve request.

Special Projects

Town Lands and Trails Brochure: There was an article in the paper on Hampstead trail mapping project, and Atkinson costs and plans for the brochure. We cannot use the draft maps because there are based on copyrighted map materials. To fully utilize the Rockingham Planning Commission ArcView maps would require an ArcView license, which is several thousand dollars. The discussion centered on how to produce the maps, since the funding was not included in the original grant application. Pete said that there is some grant money available for matching funds from RPC, if the town will match the funds. No action was taken pending further investigation. The Commission also discussed the layout of the text on the back of the brochure, and would like to use a photo by Paul as part of the background.

Wetland Zoning Amendment: support for the amendment was strongly supported by the Commission and the Planning Board.

Website: a request was received to remove the posted letter. The author authorized the use of the accompanying photos, but the email was considered private (or at least not for public posting). Scott will remove the email text.

Conservation Easements / Land Purchases

Scenic Land Designation: There was some discussion on starting the paperwork to designate the southern end of Route 121 as a "scenic road". The drive has extensive forest and brush that shields the road from development on either side. Such a designation would draw attention to the section as a special area worth conserving. The designation could be presented as a warrant article for next year's town meeting. The idea was tabled for further discussion.

Other Business

Trail Use: Tim noted that the trails behind the Community Center are heavily used, but not the Bonin Fields (Sawyer Land) into Haverhill. There was some discussion of what areas are used, or could be used, for cross-country skiing with neighboring communities. Pete noted that snowmobiles have been using the Marshall Land on the north side of town, and he has been patrolling the area.

Annual Girl Scout Outing: The annual outing will be at the Community Center on April 16th and the Conservation Commission was asked to participate with trail walks, as they did last year. Pete and Michelle volunteered for the project last year and will investigate.

The next meeting of the Commission will be Monday, April 4th, at 7:30.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Pete McVay
Based on meeting notes by Carole Hall