

Minutes, Atkinson Conservation Commission
Monday, June 6, 2005 at 7:30
Atkinson Town Hall

Call To Order by Chairman Tim Dziechowski at 7:32

Attending:

Tim Dziechowski
Scott Kukshel
Pete McVay
Michelle Veasey
Paul Wainwright

Guest Business and Plan Reviews:

Renee Merritt - 6 Bittersweet Lane, Lot 13-8-1. This was a request to add a deck within an existing area envelope of the house. Scott and Tim did a site walk and reported that the wetlands are as indicated on the plans. A letter from the soil scientist said there was no issue with the placement of the deck. Paul noted that if the Wetlands ordinance had passed, there would be no reason for Renee to appear for a variance. Michelle noted that, since the ordinance did not pass, the townspeople do want review and variance for this kind of construction, so each case of this sort should be reviewed in light of the directive from the voters. Paul made a motion that the Commission write a letter to ZBA that we see no impact and recommend variance, noting that the ordinance did not pass so the townspeople did not want a large number of variances. Tim noted that the Zoning Board is the place for the real decision, and they can accept or reject the petition as they see fit. The motion was seconded and passed, with three ayes and one nay. Tim will write the letter.

Michael Chambers - 43 Main Street, Lot 4-5. This is a petition to build a driveway through a small area of wetland on an otherwise non-wetland lot. This petition had been presented early in the year, but since the ground was snow-covered, a site inspection was deferred until spring. Tim and Pete walked the land and reported that the plans conform to the nature of the land. The location of the driveway was dictated by the state, since the driveway would exit from state Route 121. Pete made a motion to sign the expedited application. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Gilles Gagnon - Industrial Way, Lot 16-50. This is a petition to prepare the lot for industrial use, the exact nature of the business and building was unspecified. Tim noted that a Salem abutter appeared at the Zoning Board meeting recently with concerns about the wetlands in this area. The petition was deferred pending a site walk by Tim and Pete and the Salem abutter.

Atkins on East Road, tax map 19-10. 83 East Road. This is a request for the addition of an "inlaw apartment" to an existing house. Although the addition would be 51 feet from wetlands, it is within a driveway and outbuilding area, shielded from the wetland zone. Once again, it was noted that this petition would be unnecessary if the Wetlands ordinance had passed. Michelle moved that the petition be tabled until a site walk can be done. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Thomas Hodgson petition from last month was withdrawn, since a satisfactory house plan was presented to the Zoning Board that did not require any variances.

Kristina Scarpa and Nancy Remy, leaders of Cub Scout Pack 95, requested suggestions for community service activities on conservation lands. The scouts are third and fourth graders. The Commission members welcomed the efforts and recommended trail clearing and reporting activities for Pope Road, Carolyn Orr, and Sawyer Lands as possibilities.

Denise Legault - DES Wetlands Complaint, Lot 22-57. Presented concerns of conservation violations by building on this lot in Hemlock Heights. Documentation, including photographs and a site walk, showed that the construction materials and temporary swags were obstructing the abutting runoff drains and changing the stormwater patterns significantly. Also, it appears that many more trees were cleared than were allowed in the original variance request by the Zoning Board. No official recommendation or action was taken, since this is a matter for town and state regulators.

Internal Business

Secretary report: The minutes for the May meeting were approved as amended.

The “two-year term limit” in the minutes was discussed, and it was noted that this was a general guideline, not a rule or policy. There was also some discussion on what is considered a “quorum”. With five commission members, a quorum is most likely three members, not four as has been the current practice.

Tim said that Mike Saviano had requested a copy of the July 12, 2004 conservation meeting minutes as part of a petition to the Zoning Board for variance to build a deck, and a copy could not be found. Pete and Scott will review records for the minutes of the meeting. Pete will also find the draft minutes for all meetings and make sure they are available.

Treasurer’s report: “Professional Services” is down to \$187.00 because of printing and binding costs. Other items are: “Dues & Subscriptions” \$34.00 “Office supplies” \$120.00. “Ground care” \$2700.00, “Equipment” \$100.00, and “Mileage” \$25.00. More money will be needed in professional services, and this will be presented to the Selectmen. There was a discussion on how to bill the town directly for such items as property appraisals, and it was noted that the Treasurer’s office can answer these questions.

New member recruitment. The Commission has two vacancies, and suitable candidates are being sought.

Other Dredge and Fills / Site Walks / Complaints

Canoe Launch was inspected by Tim with Ted Stewart and found a trailer parked illegally in the lot. Pete had walked the area on June 4th and saw no vehicles. Also, the “No Overnight Parking” and “Atkinson Conservation Area” signs are in place.

Pope Road Trail trash was removed. The Selectmen discovered who was responsible for setting up the site as a paintball area, and the ones responsible assisted in dismantling and removing the debris.

Storm Water Management Issues: Hemlock Heights Roads were paved recently, and there are two problem areas: (1) the new construction site (Lot 22-57, discussed earlier) and an area above this lot. The upper runoff area was probably created by the town during the paving.

The **McPherson lot** may have a number of illegal horse trails. Conservation members will walk the site to see what is there. The difficulty with the McPherson land is that there is no parking area.

Special Projects

Map and Trails Project is nearing completion. All maps have been received from RPC and the GPS trails have been added in. Since the state Conservation Grant is closed on 30th June, all work must be completed and payments made from the grant by that date. Pete requested that all final edits be in to him by June 10th, and the final copy will go to the printer by June 15th. Distribution and final billing should be completed by June 25th.

Conservation Web Site Status. Up and running.

Conservation Land Deed / Designation Issues: Tim and Scott continue to investigate the status of some town and conservation lands, since it is not clear in the deeds and public records who has jurisdiction and management responsibilities.

Conservation Easements / Land Purchases

Jane Jones Lot: A site walk was done for approval of appraisal. This site has been offered for sale to the Commission. It would give complete access to Stewart Farm Pond. Pete made a motion to get the land appraised as a cluster development and single-family development, and decide on a course of action based on the appraisal. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Currier Lot is an available lot of ten acres open space. The Commission will look further into the potential of purchase.

Sawmill Swamp: there is a need to ensure access and protection of the Sawmill Swamp area. Discussion of plans was deferred to the next monthly meeting.

Discussion of the **Open Space Zoning Amendment** was deferred until the next monthly meeting.

The **Trails and rails** volunteer group is active and Pete has been in contact with members, with the goal of providing liason between the volunteers to discuss trail and pathway development.

Planning Board Agenda Items: none requiring action

Zoning Board Agenda items: none requiring action

Other Business

Town Administrator Russ McAllister presented a proposal by the town to put **gates at the Sawyer Land entrances**. The town would do the labor if the Commission would purchase the gates. A motion was made by Paul to approve the purchase of gates, keys, and locks, with the cost not to exceed \$320.00. Michelle expressed concern about the effectiveness of gates for this one area, since they could be circumvented easily. Michelle also noted that other areas, such as the Noyes Rock and Crown hill lands, are much more in need of protection and are at risk. Pete and Tim said that the gates would be a visible deterrent rather than a barrier. Gates for other lands, such as Crown Hill, will be considered in the future. Keys to the locks have to be available both the Conservation Commission members and the fire department. The motion was seconded and passed, four ayes and one nay.

Summer Mowing Schedule: Tim estimated that of three fields, one would only need two mowings and the other two would need three, and recommended transferring the excess mowing funds into the professional services line item. Tim stepped down from further discussion and Paul took over chair duties. Pete moved that Tim be hired to do the mowings. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously with one abstention.

The next meeting of the Commission will be Monday, July 11th, at 7:30.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25.

Respectfully submitted,

Pete McVay