

**Workshop, Atkinson Conservation Commission
October 17, 2005
Atkinson Town Hall**

Call To Order by Chairman Tim Dziechowski at 7:20

Attending:

Tim Dziechowski
Dan Kimball
Scott Kukshel
Pete McVay
Michelle Veasey
Paul Wainwright

Internal Business

Treasurer's report: no report. Scott has to order some books. There is ~\$350 in the budget.

Other: Pete will find out if business can be done at a "workshop".

Review of Correspondence

Planning Board Agenda Items: Carole Grant has proposed some beautification work to be done on the Cogswell Farms field and the scenic vista road south to Plaistow. There were some issues on improper dumping during construction on Industrial Way. Public hearings were held for the Cameron lot line adjustment and a change in the fire road on the housing development on the old Dickey land.

Zoning Board Agenda items: Variances were passed for Carpenter, Mastriano, and Osborne. Tim asked for an extra drain on Mastriano to avoid drainage into wetlands.

Special Projects

Town forest plan of 1989 has been scanned and set into PDF format. Discussion followed on the next steps to be taken. Possible actions are: update the current plan, send it to Charlie Moreno for a proposal for update, or revise the plan by updating the OCR version. Scott said that it would take four to six months to update the current document. Dan recommended updating the overall master plan (only two pages long), and select one or two sections to update each year, so that updating the entire plan is a continuing, but manageable, task. Tim commented that the plan needed to be updated in a manner that did not diminish either wildlife or revenue values—at a minimum, it must be revenue-neutral. Dan continued and noted that the state had both *strategic* and *operational* plans. Strategic plans are updated every five years, and operational plans are updated every three years. Pete recommended contacting other towns who have recently updated their management and master plans to see what their experiences were.

Warrant articles

Wetlands:

Text: Article 2006-x Zoning Amendment - Ecologically Significant Wetlands

Shall the town adopt the following amendment to the zoning ordinance as proposed by the Atkinson Conservation Commission? This provides an increased setback and protection for certain high value wetlands without the state oversight incurred by prime wetland status.

Add Section 410:8 d. to read as follows:

The wetland setback distances in 410:8 are increased to 150' for the following ecologically significant wetlands:

Hall Farm Road

Hog Hill Brook
Stewart Farm Pond
West Sawmill Swamp
East Sawmill Swamp
Wright Farm Pond
Bryant Brook

This increased setback does not apply to existing construction, existing waste disposal systems, replacement waste disposal systems, or existing parking lots.

For the list of wetlands above, there shall be a landscaped buffer equal to half the wetlands setback distance. This buffer shall retain natural vegetation. No more than 50% of the vegetation in the landscaped buffer may be cut.

Scott noted that the shortened article continues the problem that buffer setbacks require a lot of planning and special variances. Tim noted that a lot of the restrictions came about when a lot became a lot of record. Discussion on what is meant by “existing”—a deck is a new structure, but on an existing house. Also, Tim duplicated the shoreline protection act buffer zone. The discussion continued around the problem that the original article (rejected by voters last year) was too large, but the shortened version does not help the homeowner much. Pete asked if details can be left in a code, but codes are warrant articles like amendments, so not much is gained. Scott will rewrite last year’s amendment to simplify it, and correct the definition of “wetlands” to conform to the new state definition. Tim will wait to present a revised article to the Planning Board, pending Scott’s revision.

Parking Lot:

Text: Article 2006-x Zoning Amendment - Parking Lot Wetlands buffer

Shall the Town adopt the following amendment to the zoning ordinance as proposed by the Atkinson Conservation Commission? This provides a buffer setback between parking lots and wetlands. Current wetlands buffers only appl to buildings and waste disposal systems.

Add section 410:8 c. to read as follows:

All parking lots shall be a minimum of 100 feet from the edge of wetland. (This does not apply to existing parking lots but does apply to expansions of parking lots toward wetlands.)

Tim will ask the Planning Board to come up with a definition that will truly encompass what a parking lot is, paved and not paved. Pete recommended defining a parking lot by its purpose—that is, it is for business or public use. Pete will write up a definition and send it to Tim for the planning board.

Scenic byways:

Text: Article 2006-x Main Street Scenic Byway

Shall the Town ask the Selectmen to petition the State for State scenic Byway status for the following section of Main Street, to preserve the unique vista and rural flavor of this roadway?

Starting at the Southernmost intersection with Stage Road and extending North to Willow Vale.

The OEP web site points out that there are scenic *roads* and scenic *byways*. A scenic road designation offers more protection, since any changes have to go to the Planning Board. However, the town must assume maintenance of the road. A byway gets the right to put up a few signs and restricts billboards, but nothing else. However, the state continues maintenance. There is a lot of funding for scenic byways at the state-federal level, administered by the OEP. The Londonderry “Appleway” is an example of a scenic byway.

Municipal Trail:

Text: Article 2006-x Municipal Trail

Shall the Town make the following trail classification as proposed by the Atkinson Conservation Commission? (This allows graveling and culvert maintenance to be done by the Road Agent who has the equipment to deal with it. This will facilitate maintenance and allow emergency responder access, but not allow vehicular access.)

Designate the access trail from the end of Forest Road to the Bonin Field as a Municipal Class B Trail as provided for under RSA 231-A.

The Bonin field is the largest open field in Atkinson. This is a way to get maintenance done on the trailhead and still keep the area as a conservation area.

Conservation fund budget: the old town warrant was to move funding forward from one year to the next, as stated in the NH ACC Handbook and under the rules of RSA 36-A:4.

Open space zoning: Tim has discussed this zoning at the Planning Board meeting. Tim will write up a draft for the master plan revision and present it to us at another meeting.

Private Session: Conservation Easements / Land Purchases

Commission went into private session under RSA 91-A3d to discuss land and possible gift lands.

Private session was closed at 9:00. The Chairman noted that no business was transacted in the private session.

The Conservation Commission conveyed their thanks to Tim for his work on the articles and town land possibilities.

Other Dredge and Fills / Site Walks / Complaints

Possible violations on McPherson Land abutment and Sawyer land cutting were reported. Cars are being parked on conservation land by lot 3-108. The property owner has an easement that allows him to park the cars there. Some cutting was done on the access to conservation land at lot 2-50. However, this easement is very narrow and the abutters have rights to maintenance and access.

There was discussion on how to honor Carole Hall for her long service to the town and Conservation Commission. Pete and Tim will discuss possible awards with the town administrator.

We are running low on the trail maps, and will need some restocking, possibly out of next year's budget. A large laminated copy for use in Town Hall would be a good asset also.

The next meeting of the Commission will be Monday, November 7th, at 7:00.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Pete McVay