

Town of Newington, NH

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes for Thursday, January 16, 2014

- Call to Order:** Chair, Jane Hislop called the January 16, 2014 meeting at 6:30 p.m.
- Present:** Chair, Jane Hislop; Nancy Cauvet; Julia Fijas; Jane Kendall; Jim Weiner; and Thomas Morgan, Town Planner
- Public Guests:** Duane Hyde, Southeast Land Trust

1) New Business: Southeast Land Trust regarding Baird property, Newington Road
Mr. Duane Hyde of Southeast Land trust presented a list of appraisal proposals for the Commission's consideration for a conservation easement.

*Julie Fijas moved to **approve** an appraisal on the Baird property on Newington Road from McManus & Nault at a cost of \$3,300. Jim Weiner seconded, and the motion **passed** unanimously.*

Town Planner, Tom Morgan asked Mr. Hyde how soon the Bairds wanted to put the property into an easement, and Mr. Hyde said he thought they were interested in getting it done, but they would be patient.

Ms. Cauvet asked what Southeast Land Trust (SELT) would get out of the transaction. Mr. Hyde said SELT was a non-profit, but they did collect fees for their administrative work in securing and monitoring easements.

Mr. Hyde reviewed the Bairds' terms on the easement and said they had no intentions of using the property for agriculture considering the large expanse of wetlands. He said they were interested in cutting timber for their own firewood use, but would not do any wholesale timber cutting. The commissioners said it would be important to follow laws regarding wetlands crossings when doing any logging. Mr. Hyde said the Bairds were willing to remove the old camp that was on the site, but they still wanted to retain use of the property for their own family camping use and did not want any ATV use on the property. He said they would be fine with a public access, outdoor education uses and hunting so long as hunters followed State hunting regulations. Mr. Hyde said the Bairds agreed that the Town would have water rights up to the dam for maintenance, but they would still retain ownership of the land. Ms. Cauvet asked about liability issues associated with the reservoir. Ms. Fijas asked about posting a sign on the Town's half of the water body. Mr. Hyde said the State has a recreational use statute that provides recreational use for landowners.

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Mr. Hyde passed out budget figures and comparisons on the costs associated with Southeast Land Trust holding the conservation easement compared to the Town holding the easement. A discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of each.

Ms. Fijas asked if it was necessary to hold a conservation easement rather than some other means of conserving land, and Mr. Hyde said there were other methods, but they weren't as permanent. He said an example was the land a family donated near Portsmouth Middle School for parkland that was taken by Portsmouth in court as a higher need when they wanted to expand the school.

Ms. Fijas asked if it were possible to dissolve the conservation easement held by SELT if there were a disagreement. Mr. Hyde said SELT was in the easement holding business and the intention of a conservation easement was to protect it into perpetuity, but it could be transferred to another non-profit entity.

Mr. Morgan said he liked the idea of the Town owning the easement, but having SELT holding the easement because it seemed to be the most effective means of monitoring at the least cost to the Town. Chair Hislop agreed.

Mr. Morgan noted this easement would help keep more open space along Great Bay abutting Pease National Resource Protection, the golf course, and the Smith Farm on the Greenland border, one of the last pieces of the King's grant land on the road.

1) Old Business: Fox Point Easement

It was announced that the Commission would attend the next Board of Selectmen's meeting to discuss their intentions to protect Fox Point in a conservation easement, and how they would implement the easement.

Ms. Fijas asked why they wouldn't have an entity like Southeast Land Trust hold the easement for Fox Point as well and it was explained that Fox Point was a central piece of land in Town that residents were accustomed to having access to, and the easement would be separate from the management document that would be more open to change should the Town decide it was warranted in the future.

Minutes: *Nancy Cauvet moved to **approve** the Minutes for the December 5, 2014 meeting. Julie Fijas seconded, and the motion **passed** unanimously.*

Announcements and Discussions:

Ms. Fijas announced that she and her family would be moving to Thailand in the spring and she would need to step down from the Commission in the next month.

Mr. Morgan said PSNH had recently met with him, Board of Selectmen, Jan Stuart and Planning Board Chair, Denis Hebert regarding a proposal to bring transmission lines from the Deerfield station, under Great Bay from Durham, through Gundalow Landing, across the Frink Farm and up through Hannah Lane. He said the

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electricity would be generated from Quebec and come down through the Northern Pass. He said they were informed that they would run into an issue if they wanted to cross the Frink Farm, which was on the National Register of Historic Places.

Chair Hislop suggested that student interns from UNH's Thompson School might do some work on invasive species or trail markings in the Town Forest. Ms. Fijas asked if a UNH intern might also work on community education outreach

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned by unanimous decision at 8:30 p.m.

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 13, 2014

**Respectfully
Submitted by:** Jane K. Kendall, Recording Secretary