

Campton Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2009 7:00 pm

Members Present: Jess Halm, Melissa Greenawalt-Yelle, Jane Kellogg, Jules Doner, Lisa Doner, Tammy Wooster

1. Town Meeting Preparation:

- a. Budget: As a result of the recent Pattee property purchase and the new initiative to assist landowners with conservation easements, it was decided that we should appoint a treasurer. This person would track conservation trust fund expenditures, communicate budgetary issues with Ann Marie and develop a more efficient bookkeeping system. Jules volunteered to take over these responsibilities. Jules reported that he contacted Carol Andrews from the NH Assoc. of Conservation Commissions who confirmed that it is appropriate to use Conservation Trust Fund monies to pay for the maintenance of the Pattee property with the understanding that proceeds from the sale of the house are to be returned to the trust fund. Jules also confirmed this through the NH Local Gov't. Center. He learned that there is free legal counsel available to town officials through this center which could be a valuable resource to us.
- b. Display: We will discuss the details of our town meeting display and set up a sub-committee at our next business meeting scheduled for Feb.11th. In the meantime, Melissa will find out who the moderator is this year.
- c. Naming Contest for Pattee Property: In an effort to decide on a name for the newly acquired Pattee Property, we will be putting out collection jars to solicit ideas from the public. Location ideas discussed for the jars include the Town Hall, Public Library and at Town meeting. Lisa created a one page notice detailing the naming contest which will be posted along with the jars/shoeboxes. Lisa will e-mail the notice to Melissa so she can print a copy to bring along to the Campton Historical Society's upcoming movie night. Jess will send Joelle Freeman information announcing the naming contest in the "Talk of the Towns" segment of the Record Enterprise. The winner of the contest will be announced some time after town meeting and will have bragging rights to the new name.
- d. Warrant Article for Sale of Pattee House: CC members attended last weeks Select Board meeting to gain some understanding about the Pattee house sale warrant article and town meeting protocol. Ann Marie assured us that the warrant article will include language describing the requirement of returning proceeds from the sale of the house to the Conservation Fund. The wording will be run by town legal counsel before being finalized. Jess asked if the CC should involve a realtor in the house sale and if so at what point we should involve one. It was suggested that we contact a local realtor ASAP for the purpose of getting some comparative market values for the house. Ann Marie offered to ask the town tax assessor to also provide a market value figure. Jess also asked who would be taking questions from the floor at town meeting relative to the Pattee warrant article and it was confirmed that CC members would.

CC members agreed that all Campton realtors should be given the opportunity to list the Pattee house and that the more input we have prior to town meeting the better prepared we will be. Jane will draft a letter to realtors asking for market value information and interest in serving as the listing agent. Jess will be the lead CC contact person listed in the letter, and we will schedule an open house for the purpose of realtor viewing. Jane suggested that we attend another Select Board meeting after receiving responses from interested realtors to keep communication open.

- e. Annual Report Finalization: Jess wrote the CCC annual report and asked us all to review it. A few wording changes were made and it was decided to include the CC's vernal pool work, and in particular to make note of the help we received from Peggy Martin in beginning to document some of Campton's vernal pools. Melissa will make the final edits and contact Ann Marie to fill in some missing budget figures.

2. **Conservation Easement Letter Response:**

Since our last meeting, Jess and Melissa identified Campton residents who own greater than 50 acres of land and sent them a letter explaining the new tax incentives for conservation easement donations. This letter generated a call of interest from a property owner who contacted Jane. Jane offered to serve as the lead CC member for this first project and will provide materials to the landowner as a starting point, but wanted input from CC members as to what to include in the packet. Jess and Melissa retrieved some publications from CC library and we agreed on several including the CCC brochure, the Conservation Resource Guide for Campton Landowners and the Pemi-Baker Land Trust publication. The book *Conserving Your Land/Options for New Hampshire Landowners* by Brenda Lind was identified as the most comprehensive resource and Jane will contact Phil Auger for more copies. It was also agreed that a list of legal contacts and a list of costs associated with conservation easements should be created and included in the packet. Lisa suggested that we have a few packets on hand at town meeting in the event of an easement related inquiry. Jane will work on putting together some packets.

In thinking through the process of assisting the landowner in conservation easement projects, Jane also generated an outline of general procedures to follow and asked for our input. Some of the things outlined were discussion points with landowners, establishing confidentiality, steps in researching the property, documenting the project, and follow up steps. All agreed that Jane's outline will provide a great framework to work within and that each easement project will likely help in streamlining this process.

One outline point discussed was the value of a property questionnaire. Jane shared an example used by the Forest Society and thought that it would be a valuable information gathering tool and could be filled out along with the landowner as a discussion starting point. The last outline item discussed was how to deal with requests for use of conservation trust funds in assisting with easement donation costs. Although it is within the scope of allowable expenditures of trust funds to assist with costs, we may be faced with having to turn down requests for financial help, especially if the easement has no particular conservation interest to us. All agreed that it would be difficult to justify refusing funds to someone if we don't have a policy and process to follow. Lisa suggested that we encourage landowners to apply for grant funds in addition to using our resources, with us serving as facilitators. Lisa also said it would be ideal to establish some kind of conservation value

index, perhaps within the context of a database to assist in justifying when and how we provide funds. To wrap up this topic we agreed that on the horizon for this year should be to generate ideas and parameters for how this process should work. Jess reiterated the importance of communicating to landowners our willingness to be facilitators in a comfortable and confidential environment.

3. **Work in Progress: Management Plan for Pattee Property:** Due to time constraints, this topic was tabled until our Feb. business meeting.
4. **FYI:**
 - a. Groundwater Protection Meeting: Tammy reported that our joint CVP/CCC groundwater protection meeting is still on, and scheduled for Wed. Jan. 21st at 7pm. Melissa will re-circulate links to the relevant documents via e-mail. Pierce Rigrod from DES will conduct a Q&A session to get us going on this project.
 - b. Pattee House Update: Jules has been persistent in trying to maintain an acceptable humidity level at the Pattee house. He has tried turning the furnace on for short periods while opening an upstairs window and outside door to drive the humid air out and dry air in. Ice has been building up on the windows and blinds during this extreme cold period. Approx. 10 gallons of oil have been used in the past month. It is suspected that the moisture may be coming from the basement dirt floor and Tammy suggested that we try putting down a rolled sheet plastic vapor barrier. All will check for plastic and if Jules does not hear from anyone by tomorrow at noon he will buy some. We will meet at the Pattee house Friday Jan 16th at 3:30 pm to lay some plastic. Jules will be going away at the end of the month and Lisa will takeover checking on the house.
 - c. New Member Inquiry: 30 yr. Campton resident Ellen Edersheim has expressed interest in becoming a CCC member. Jess will invite her to our next meeting.
 - d. New File Cabinet: The new cabinet has been purchased and painted by Jules and resides where the old CCC library used to be. Some files are in it but not organized, and more are to be added. Jess has the key.
 - e. Protected River Signs: Jess reported that she still has not heard from Laura Weit (DES) as to whether the remaining 2 sign units have been completed, but the town has been billed for them. Jules also checked while in Concord, but no one was available to confirm.
 - f. Planning Board FYI: Jane reported that there will be a question on the ballot relative to changes in the cluster lot zoning language. The proposed changes require that cluster lots be a minimum of 5 acres and that a cluster not exceed 15 lots. Additionally, the common land designated must be green, unbuildable, permanently protected, is not to include driveways or roadways, and must make up a minimum of 25% of the cluster.
 - g. A&H Automotive: Jane reported that someone from the Planning Board is questioning the owner of A&H Auto as to whether the property is being used for more than it was intended and originally approved for. There has been some heavy equipment, topsoil, and firewood piled/stored at the back of the property which is to remain open as a buffer to the Mad River. There may not be a problem and the owner has expressed

willingness to attend the next PB meeting. If it becomes an issue, there may be some CC interest.

- h.** Yankee Forestlands: To date there has been no feedback from the letter sent to Yankee Forest Lands expressing concerns over the Beebe River crossing ATV damage. We will wait and revisit this in the spring.
- i.** Web Soil Survey Tool: Lisa attended a workshop where she learned to use a web based program that taps into the U.S. soil maps. She created a map that selected for farmland of statewide interest and learned that the Pattee property falls under this classification. Lisa explained that this program could have many future applications for use by the CC and Planning Board including identifying floodplains, developable areas, and septic appropriate soils.

Meeting Adjourned @ 9:23pm
Next Meeting Feb. 11th 7pm