

Campton Conservation Commission Minutes
September 10, 2008

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

Others present: CVP members: Gary Benedix, Ron Landry, Dave Gyger, and John Whitney

1. Groundwater Protection Ordinance Language (with CVP):

- a. Master Plan: As preparation for this joint CVP meeting we reviewed the Model Ordinance for Groundwater Protection document created by the OEP. In the document was the recommendation that the town's Master Plan address the subject of groundwater protection. Jane consulted the Master plan, where in particular, Chapter 7 (land use) task #3 references the revision of zoning language designed to protect natural resources and improve protective measures. The plan also refers to increasing public awareness of the town's natural resources. All agreed that the Master Plan speaks to the subject of groundwater protection in a general way.

- b. Next Steps: Jess summarized a list of groundwater protection options including restrictive zoning, land use prohibitions, and an inspection program. Tammy reported that she had a lengthy conversation with Pierce Rigrod from DES who runs the source water protection program. Mr. Rigrod clarified the classification of Campton's stratified drift aquifer as a "GB" and/or a "GA2" both of which serve as the lowest levels of protection. Under New Hampshire's Groundwater Protection Act reclassifying the aquifer to the higher levels of "GA1" or "GAA" would provide a local entity (presumably the CVP) with the authority to implement a protection program. A protection program would require the commitment to inventory all potential contamination sources (PCS), and formulate a management plan with inspection and education components.

Discussion continued with many questions including what exactly do we want to protect, that is, the whole aquifer or only the wellhead protection area? What about other public water supplies in town? It was noted that the stratified drift aquifer is not just confined to Campton's boundaries and so we may have to bring other towns on board. All agreed that increasing public awareness of the town's drinking water supply should be a priority and that it is likely that most aren't even aware of where their water comes from. Tammy said that Mr. Rigrod offered to attend a meeting to answer questions and guide us through the process of reclassification if this is the consensus. All welcomed this offer and Tammy will

contact Mr. Rigrod to schedule a meeting for any upcoming Wednesday night. CCC and CVP members expressed willingness to dedicate a special meeting for this purpose.

2. **Pattee Property**

- a. Update: Jules shared with us a workup of properties comparable to the Pattee Property that the Selectmen requested. The data Jules assembled was in three parts: Houses sold in 2007/2008, land sold in 2007/2008, and land currently on the market. The result of this exercise showed that the house and the land on a per acre basis were in line with area property values. Lisa reported that realtor Laurie Coffin told her that the 1.7 acre piece of land across the street from the Pattee house is now being offered at \$35,000. It is believed that the only other water source besides the one on the house lot exists on this parcel. This needs to be considered if the house is not included in the purchase or if the house is sold separately in the future. Jess asked what the cost of drilling a new well would be. It was agreed that whatever the cost it would be cheaper than \$35,000.

- b. Officially vote for the use of Conservation Fund monies: Jess and Melissa proposed that before a vote takes place that we review the Conservation Fund Guidelines. After considering each criterion for land conservation projects we came to a consensus that the Pattee property has the potential for meeting six of the eight criteria. Jane thought that we should present the conservation fund guidelines and use them as talking points at the upcoming public hearing. Jess shared a copy of the public hearing notice and confirmed the hearing as taking place on Sept 17th 7:30 pm at the Historical Society building. The discussion then centered on the purpose of the hearing with some disagreement among members. Some believed that the purpose of the public hearing is to solicit feedback from the town before proceeding with a detailed plan. That is, since there is a strict timetable for purchase it is not possible to have a clear vision for the property. Others argued that without presenting a fully thought out plan, the town may feel that there is no justification for expending the money. There was unanimous agreement that we need to communicate what we as a commission have discussed as potential uses of the property to date with the intention of fully considering all public input. Jane said that she received an e-mail from Mae sharing questions/ideas of potential uses of the property from people coming through the town office. They include a town-wide yard sale, carnival, music festivals, ball field, and picnic tables. At this point Melissa expressed her concern that we may be using up all of the LUCT funds to purchase the property and create expectations of property uses that can't be met or that we may be expected to manage. Melissa's point was well taken and it was agreed that we have to decide what we will and will not consider as valid uses of land purchased with conservation fund monies. Jess said that she was initially opposed to the idea of a ball field in the context of conservation but that view softens when a ball field is viewed as a community gathering place. A quick rundown of universally acceptable

uses of the property by CC members include a community garden, town nursery, berry bush plantings, orchard, and an access point to the state forest. It was discussed that other public uses such as a music festival could feasibly work if it was allowed within a specific timeframe, say after bird nesting season if parts of the land were managed as grasslands for wildlife. In terms of management of the property, all agreed we propose to the town that a separate committee be formed for this purpose, possibly with one or more CC members. Also, the question should be posed at the hearing as to whether the town is willing to spend tax money on the management of any portions of the land used for non-conservation activities. Melissa's point of using all of the LUCT funds on this one project was then revisited. What if we spend most of the fund and then miss out on a future opportunity perhaps with greater conservation potential? Jess expressed that the LUCT fund was building at an impressive rate and that it will continue to build. Jane suggested we get the latest exact figure from Hanna before the hearing. Jules noted that even if we do purchase the property and a consensus can't be reached as to what to do with it, the land still has value and in a worst case scenario could be resold. It was noted that there is nothing else on the table at the time and that we run the risk of losing funds if we don't put them to use. All agreed that if we don't purchase the Pattee property, it will surely be lost to development, and because of its unique open space value with high visibility/accessibility we essentially have a blank slate to work with. The idea of making an offer on just the land and not the house was then discussed. This would lower the price considerably, and would still leave some money in the LUCT fund for other uses while freeing us up from the liability/management of the house. This alternative was well received by all which then proceeded to discussion of a vote. Again, there was some disagreement/confusion as to what exactly we were voting on, at which time Jess consulted an e-mail from the town attorney. Based on the attorney's recommendations Jules made the following motion: To enter into a Purchase & Sales agreement with Noseworthy Realty on the purchase of 10.7 acres of Pattee land which does not include the house and the 0.5 acre of land the house sits on for the price of \$125,000 and associated titling costs on the condition that the earnest money of \$1,000 be refundable to the conservation fund if the Conservation Commission votes against the purchase based on lack of support at the public hearing on Sept 17, 2008. The motion was seconded by Jane and passed unanimously. The Pattee property discussion ended with the scheduling of a Monday 9/15, 6pm meeting at Jules house to prepare for the public hearing.

3) FYI Items:

Because of the late hour, Jess moved to table most of the FYI items until the next meeting. Those that were addressed were;

- a. Yankee Lands letter: Lisa is now on board with Melissa to get the letter out.

- b. TNC/GRANIT : Melissa reported this new partnership is working to update the GRANIT database with Campton's info. Melissa and Jane will start reviewing the pdf file sent for accuracy.
- c. Larry Spencer e-mail: Invitation to a 9/17 Holderness CC meeting to introduce the new PSU Center for the Environment director.
- d. Workshops:
 - i. North Country Council annual meeting 10/9/2008 4:30 pm, Common Man, Plymouth
 - ii. 2008 Municipal Law Lecture Series: www.nhlgc.org
 - iii. Land Use Clerks Works: Sept.20th,2008, 9am-3pm @ NH Local Gov't. Ctr., Concord NH

Meeting Adjourned, 10:08 pm

Next meeting: October 8,2008 7:30 pm