

Lebanon Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting, 2/2/09
Minutes

Call to order, 4:32 p.m.

Members present: Keith Laporte, Marc Lang, Alton Blodgett, Jan Fitter, Howard Wayland, Emery Gluck, Jon Slate, Toni Willard (arrived c. 4:50)
Member absent: David Scata
Also present: Phil Chester, Town Planner

Jon Slate was named acting alternate.

Motion to approve minutes for 1/5/09 meeting. Correction noted: p. 2, representative of JT is John (not Dean) Pagini. With correction, approval seconded and passed unanimously.

No audience present.

Marc reported on investigation of grant funding for a preservation easement on part of property 08-E. A trail-grant program might be interested. So might DEP. DEP also has a grant program for parking lots. The tract under consideration is adjacent to preserved open space and would help protect significant water resources. Marc will continue to investigate.

Phil reported that the Rechlin easement is undergoing revision. JT is acting as liaison with the Rechlins and assisting with the easement language; Phil, Marc, and Jan met with JT reps to discuss language acceptable to the Rechlins, and a new draft is progressing.

Property 09-B: Good faith letters from all co-owners are in hand. Probable for USDA grant with CFT/owner match. We rated the property; it scored 18 (not counting points for pending preserved open space adjacent). Motion to recommend appraisal, seconded and passed unanimously.

Phil has been approached by a property owner interested in subdividing part of a parcel and creating ag. preservation easements on other parts. The parcel is in view from three town roads. The proposed configuration would place house lots so as to preserve views from roads.

Property appraisals and grant application deadlines are coming up very soon for 08-D, 09-A, and 09-B. We voted to recommend appraisals for 08-D and 09-A at earlier meetings.

Old business:

Emery reported on tree harvesting possibilities to open the view at Commons Hill. Trees on top of the parcel are not saw-log quality. Trees on the south slope (those reducing the view) are of higher quality, but it is not certain whether it would be financially worthwhile for a forester to harvest them. Emery emphasized that any arrangement should be secured by a formal contract. It was agreed that tree harvesting decisions can be decided later; the first task is to get the trail set up and marked. The required gate and sign were discussed; the sign will need to specify several conditions (some required by the license agreement), including that the area is open to hunting on NU land. The sign will cost money. A gate may be donated, but posts or lolly columns will have to be planted.

The trail proposal needs to be presented to the Board of Selectmen. This could occur on this coming Tues., Feb. 12, at 2:00, but the Selectmen meet at least a couple of times a month. Jan will write up a brief description to accompany the map.

Earth Day litter pick up: If residents pick up litter in their neighborhood and bag it, they can call the Selectmen's office to request pick-up by town crew. Jan will write up an announcement for Lebanon Life in hope that they will run it in the April issue. [Earth Day is April 22, according to my calendar.]

Jan e-mailed the list of landowners for the town hall plaque to Wayne Budney on Jan. 16 and hasn't heard anything yet.

New business:

Tues., Feb. 2, 2:00: Board of Selectmen will consider tax exemption for farm buildings. All interested should attend if possible.

Tues., Feb. 26, 7:00: Board of Finance meeting – Try to attend to (1) support the Conservation Commission operating budget (we need the \$500 requested – trail sign, nameplates for town hall plaque, probably one or two more individual plaques, and more), and (2) plead for adding \$75,000 to the open space fund this year (already reduced from \$100,000, specified in the capital plan, which is needed to allow use of the fund while maintaining its growth).

Alton distributed a flyer announcing an **invasive plant workshop** “for government, town, and municipal officials.” Conn Ag. Experiment Station, 123 Huntington St., New Haven, March 5, 9:00-1:00, lunch provided. Discussion followed; the town has no policy and its practices may be spreading invasives, including Japanese knotweed, one of the worst..

Motion to adjourn at c. 6:00 pm; seconded and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Jan Fitter, Ass't Chair/Sec'y