

Bolton Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: November 12, 2007
Time: 6:00 pm
Location: Smilie School
Members Present: Sharon Murray, Amy May, Tammy Coe (to be confirmed)
Guest Present: Dick Katzman/Vermont Climbing Resource Access Group (CRAG-VT)

CRAG-VT Update

Dick Katzman provided an update regarding CRAG-VT's existing land holdings in Bolton (Bolton Quarry, Lower West Bolton Cliffs) and their work with local landowners to obtain land/easements to the Upper West Bolton Cliffs behind Duck Brook Circle, adjacent to the Town's Preston Pond Conservation Area. CRAG-VT has contacted the Vermont Land Trust but, because of the small acreages involved, it may be too expensive for VLT to amend existing easements, etc. to add these parcels to Preston Pond.

They also have a long-term goal, as a volunteer board, of transferring ownership of their holdings to the town. CC members noted that, while the town has generally been supportive of CRAG-VT's conservation efforts to date, there may be concerns regarding 1) the effect that this would have on the local tax base, and 2) potential liabilities to the town. Given this year's vote to not fund the town's Conservation Fund, this may not be the best time for such a proposal. The CC has agreed to work with the Selectboard to evaluate the fiscal impacts of land conservation on the tax base. The CC agreed to continue to meet with CRAG-VT as they go forward.

Membership

Tammy Coe attended as the CC's newest member, filling the vacancy left by Lars Botzjorn's recent resignation. She will check on the status of her appointment to the Commission by the Select Board. Tammy works for the Rainforest Alliance in Richmond.

Amy noted that she is moving to Ottawa, so this was her last Commission meeting. Tammy agreed to replace Amy as our representative on the Chittenden Uplands Project. Amy noted that they meet four times a year at the Monitor Barn in Richmond.

Sharon noted that Joyce Holsten, who lives on Stage Road, has expressed an interest in joining the Commission but couldn't make the meeting. Sharon will follow up on her nomination/appointment with the Town Clerk.

2008 Budget Request

The CC's current budget is \$1,600, which has, for the most part, remained unspent this year. In the past the budget has been used for group memberships on the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions, equipment (GPS, trail maintenance), signs, training (Keeping Track), etc. It was agreed to at minimum request level funding for FY08 to cover the costs of resource inventory mapping and trail maintenance. Sharon also agreed to get an estimate for doing the conservation fiscal impact analysis for inclusion in our FY08 budget, or as a separately funded line item.

Kokell Preliminary Subdivision/PRD Review

Sharon reported that the DRB had adjourned the hearing on the preliminary Kokell PRD application and would be issuing a decision shortly. The CC will have another opportunity to provide comments when they apply for final PRD approval.

Joiner Brook Phase II Geomorphic Assessment

Sharon distributed copies of the pre-proposal for state funding of a Phase II assessment of Joiner as submitted to the state on Friday. Drafts were forwarded to the Town Clerk/Select Board and Planning Commission for review prior to submission.

Mail Bag

The CC received a formal letter and status report from the state, dated 9/15/07 indicating that the Vermont Recreation Trails Grant for Preston Pond work is officially closed – many thanks to Tom for all his work on overseeing the project.

Meeting Schedule

It was agreed that the CC would continue to meet on the 2nd Monday of the month, at 6:00 pm. Sharon will see about moving our meetings to the new Town Office, and also getting filing cabinet and map/equipment storage space.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.

The next regular meeting of the Conservation Commission is tentatively scheduled for Monday, December 10, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Murray
Acting Secretary