

Minutes of the TOPSFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

TOWN LIBRARY, MEETING ROOM

June 22, 2011 7:00PM

Present: Chairman Pro Tem Luther, MacDougall, Jolley, Erickson, Pratt, Administrator Spillman, and Minutes Secretary Cashman

Absent: Merrill and Hall

Others Present: Heather Darrah, Summer Intern

Acting Chairman Luther called the meeting to order at 7:11PM.

DISCUSSIONS:

Comments regarding draft meeting minutes

Acting Chair Holger noted his preference for short summaries rather than transcripts of the meetings. The minutes, he noted, are for legal record and need not be a blow-by-blow accounting of each person's comments. Several members including MacDougall, and Erickson and Administrator Spillman added suggestions including a proposal for an index page of acronyms accompany the meeting minutes book, rather than at the beginning of every minutes report.

Jolley submitted missing Asian Longhorn Beetle contact information from the last meeting.

OoCs 307-0507, 120 High Street/Hickory Beech Development, submitted monitoring reports

Falzone's report (Beals Associates) was sent prior to the meeting by Spillman to all members. Concern about the paving over of manhole covers was discussed. Jolley mentioned that she had conducted a drive-by site visit and mentioned the steep slope had much sediment pooling. Spillman concurred in her analysis; over the past 6 months she has noted sediment in the swale and the downslope detention area off the far cul-de-sac that should be removed. Luther mentioned that he spoke with Larry Beals concerning as-built plans; Beals indicated that they would not be ready until completion of the project. Luther recommended a letter be sent to Falzone requesting the sediment be cleaned up. MacDougall recounted inspection and normal paving procedures should include raising the lid to the surface and to ask Falzone why this was not done. Erickson agreed and said the lids should be raised to grade before the final course. He questioned whether or not the as-builts were consulted prior to coating. Luther mentioned that when he was on the Planning Board, the procedure was to conduct a survey and all as-builts were completed in a report. There is no such report for 120 High Street to-date.

Luther recommended TCC request from Falzone an accounting of elevations on the inverts, sizes of the pipes and outfalls. Erickson added that in absence of as-built plans or engineer's notes, Beals should provide invert elevations and direction of pipes for each individual catch basin on the property for stormwater information. Luther felt strongly that the Planning Board should direct that effort.

ACTION:

- Spillman will talk with Roberta Knight about as-built plans status for 120 High Street.
- Spillman to draft a letter to Falzone and the Planning Board requesting status on as-built plans and reminding Falzone of sediment clean-up, for MacDougall and Luther to review prior to sending.

TCC Strategic Plan: Spillman noted the 2008 Plan was sent to all members. Luther mentioned TCC should table discussion until all members were present. No discussion took place at this meeting.

School Brook Water Quality Testing: Luther discussed results of the report and briefly detailed methods for obtaining such. He indicated the count of 1,000/ ml. of fecal coliform bacteria is troublesome and there is too huge a variability in the report's findings. Luther suggested replicating the test to validate the findings. MacDougall noted that potentially poor methodology could be the source of such a high count, but it would be very difficult to get a high positive count if there aren't bacteria in the water – it is hard to get that high of a count merely with poor methodology.

There was a recommendation to send the report to the Board of Health noting in the cover letter that School Brook is polluted and action should be taken. The problem is present upstream of the Library.

Further discussion by Luther ensued regarding the potential for a groundwater problems existing in School Brook. MacDougall suggested conducting a test with optical brighteners in the summer to prove accuracy of the existing findings at School Brook. Luther mentioned the (not-yet-issued) CoC should exonerate the Library of this testing. Spillman asked if signs should be put up. MacDougall recalled Essex had done so on one occasion.

Erickson moved to send the final report to the Board of Health, Library, Board of Selectmen, Highway Dept., and the Water Dept. MacDougall seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

ACTION: Spillman to send the report to the BOH, Library, Hwy. Dept. and Water Dept. as informational only.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

255 High Street Conservation Property – Heather Darrah's site visit report from Wenham Road

Darrah submitted to the TCC a presentation of photos taken at the site and provided assessor's maps to recount the walk-thru taken by Spillman and her. She pointed to a large tree noting the winter moths had done some damage. Spillman suggested a nice walking/hiking trail could be developed from Morningside to Wenham Road. Discussion about whether the Eagle Scouts could be put to work on this project ensued, but MacDougall suggested it would be prudent to first put together a strategic management plan for this property. The management plan should include habitat species as well as notations about endangered species.

Both Spillman and Darrah noted there was evidence of at least one original boundary marker and some remains of the stone wall on the property at Wenham Road. Spillman suggested property boundary markers by survey, at least along boundaries susceptible to encroachment. She suggested the project could be paid for from the Conservation Fund (current balance is ~\$6300)

The property has some large areas of invasive plant species including mostly bittersweet, but on the whole, the field and the forest are prime for a walking trail.

Spillman and Darrah reported that there has been dumping on the site – at the corner of the property where the intermittent stream goes under Wenham Road. Spillman will ask Dave Bond to install a sign at that location.

Luther asked if the Essex County Trail Association (ECTA) would take on the project to create a trail. Some members felt, however, that it would be a good Eagle Scout project. MacDougall

suggested having Heather look into NHESP information and creating a map of the various portions of the property according to habitat types.

MacDougall recommended procuring an iPhone which would allow Spillman to take pictures, chart via GPS the various boundary markers and locations for notation, etc. Spillman asked about cost factors and MacDougall indicated it was probably affordable through the Town if they had a contract with a local service provider. He thought cost associated was approximately \$200 with a \$50 a month fee. He also recommended ArcView as an option and volunteered to show Heather how to use it.

ACTIONS: Research iPhone option and assemble management plan assessment.

OoC 307-0583 Ferncroft Country Club – update

Spillman made a site visit on June 21, with Chuck Costello (representing the Ferncroft). Spillman noted Costello said that the initial fish survey was completed by Mike DeRosa, dredging of Pond #1 (Middleton) is complete, and only a part of Pond #2 was dredged (in Topsfield). Additional dredging of Pond #2 and dredging of Pond #3 are scheduled for next winter. Spillman and Costello reviewed the dredged material dumping area, where two deep (~7-10 feet deep) holes have been dug to create berms and additional storage capacity – outside of all resource areas. There are large shells from freshwater shellfish (freshwater mussels) in the dredged material.

MacDougall suggested next time to save the freshwater mussel shell for ID. Certain types, like the “Alewife floaters” – associated with alewives – are mutually dependent for their survival and existence. The freshwater mussel attaches itself to alewife fish as they swim upstream. MacDougall noted the alewives count was down this year—only 500 fish.

MacDougall noted invasive growth of water chestnut has been found in a Ferncroft Pond. Questions arose surrounding the cost of eradication. MacDougall felt doing nothing might be worse. It was recommended to inquire via letter of Costello and DeRosa asking for a copy of the fish survey and a management plan for the water chestnut eradication.

Town-wide Invasive Species Control along roadways:

Luther asked how much it might cost for seasonal workers to help with this project. Spillman indicated Concord has seasonal workers. Pratt recommended this might be a project for the Eagle Scouts.

MacDougall shared methodology used by one resident from the Ward Hill Reservation, which includes drilling holes into the invasives and administering Brush-B-Gone™. Over a period of 50 years the gentleman has eradicated several invasive species over the 600 acres.

MacDougall suggested using Garlon 4 Ultra (chemical); electric drill – inject. Timing is important. MacDougall suggested the 3rd and 4th week in July.

Luther felt the Commission should seek a licensed applicator within the Town and not hire out.

Stream Crossing Inventory Training, June 23, 2011:

The Commission was reminded that they will meet at 5 p.m. at the Topsfield Library for the training and to conduct a walk-thru of the stream assessment. Attending from the Commission: Luther, MacDougall, Spillman, Jolley, and Erickson. MacDougall noted that 25 people have signed on representing Boxford, Ipswich, Reading, North Reading, Wenham and Middleton.

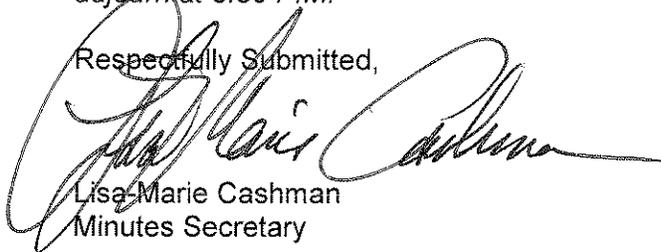
OTHER BUSINESS:

A brief discussion about using the sledding hill for Topsfield Fair parking and inquiring about using Petco and other area businesses' parking lots ensued, but no actions were requested.

Jud Pratt announced that his appointment expires June 30, 2011 and that this would be his last attended meeting. Holger thanked Pratt for his three years of service and extended his wishes to see him continue on in some capacity. Jud thanked the Commission; he noted that he enjoyed this experience and that the group had excellent people at the helm. He volunteered to serve ad hoc where he could.

On a **MOTION** made by Jolley and seconded by Pratt, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lisa-Marie Cashman
Minutes Secretary

Accepted at the TCC meeting on July13, 2011

Pursuant to the "Open Meeting Law," G.L.39 §23B, the approval of these minutes by the Commission constitutes a certification of the date, time, and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the action taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter is included for the purpose of context only, and is not certification, express or implied, is made the Commission as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.