

Swanzy Open Space Committee
7/10/07 meeting minutes

*Minutes are not final until reviewed and approved by the Open Space Committee.
Review and approval of minutes generally takes place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee.*

The meeting convened at 5:00 p.m.

Attendance: Victoria Barlow, Nancy Carlson, Katherine Feist, Jeanne Thieme, Bud Winsor. Town Planner Carbonneau. Advisory Board member Dave Krisch also was present.

Status of current land protection projects

Pendleton easement

Status quo - Attorney Caffrey is still trying to get the Texas lender to correct Lily's reverse mortgage.

Johnson easement

Committee members toured the Johnson land on Saturday, June 23 from 9:00 to 11:00.

The first of the Board of Selectmen's two public hearings required by RSA 41:14-a was held on June 27. The purpose of the hearing was to take public input regarding the release of funds from the Conservation Land Acquisition capital reserve fund to make the donation to the MC for their purchase of the Johnson easement, and to pay for transaction costs. The Selectmen have solicited comment from the Planning Board (vote in favor, 5/17/2007) and the Conservation Commission (vote in favor, 6/12/07). Barlow, Feist, and Thieme represented the OSC (testimony appended). No members of the public were present.

The second public hearing is scheduled for July 11 at 7:30 p.m., Town Hall.
At their regularly scheduled meeting on July 25, the Selectmen will take action.

The June 30 day of work on the Little Red Barn at the Cheshire Fair resulted in a scraped, painted, and cleaned building.

On Thursday, July 5, Ryan Owens from the Monadnock Conservancy (MC) met with Johnson (Thieme and Barlow also present) to outline requirements resulting from Richard Pendleton's on-site environmental assessment of the parcel.

1. The buried gas tank must be removed, under supervision from Pendleton.
2. Pendleton will test a sample of tap water from the Johnson house.
3. The junk metal and cars must be removed; Pendleton will inspect the cleared area to ensure that there is no contamination.

Johnson may appreciate help from OSC members with the removal of junk cars and metal - Thieme will alert members if this is possible. Krisch offers to inspect materials to determine what can go to the recycling center.

Kibler and Gill (no Town involvement)

The MC is proceeding with the two-owner, contiguous 348-acre project in the Perry Brook watershed (south Swanzy, north Richmond). The survey and draft easement language are in the works, with a targeted 2007 completion.

Martin Brook watershed (Pullen, Dunn, King)

The MC remains interested in helping with easements on these parcels. As yet, the landowners have taken no action. Owens encourages OSC members to contact these landowners, to stay in touch and assist when they are ready to take the next step.

Liaison reports

Planning Board: The two working groups continue to meet and discuss zoning changes.

Conservation Commission: The CC is represented on both PB working groups.

Board of Selectmen: The Selectmen have held the Johnson easement public hearings. Carlson is promoting a conservation easement on the County Farm land (see New Business).

OS Advisory: Thieme is preparing a report outlining business of the past 3 months.

Status of assignments + projects

Web page - No activity.

Project management worksheet, communications log

Feist and Lilly will finalize the Excel spreadsheet on July 23.

Protection of 3 town-owned parcels - Carlson and Winsor

Carlson and Winsor will schedule site walks this month, and will notify Committee members by e-mail should others wish to join the walks. The Causeway property is first priority; Jerry Bussiere may help lead the site walk.

Town land purchase/easement management - The working group consisting of Crowder and Barlow (representing Open Space), Scott Self (representing the Planning Board), and Tiffany Mannion (representing ConCom) continues to research and prepare recommended changes to transform Swanzey's existing cluster subdivision regulations into proposed conservation subdivision regulations.

Postcards - Barlow has prepared and will shortly mail a postcard publicizing the presence of Swanzey's ambassadors of open space protection at Old Home Day and in *The Old Homestead*.

Oxen initiative -

Crowder and Evan Barlow have designed a banner for use during the Old Home Day parade and as a skirt at the OSC's information table at Old Home Day and the Cheshire Fair. Barlow has updated the 4-page brochure, and prepared an inexpensive ½ page handout for Twinkletown.

Tiger Batchelder has agreed to drive the team in the Old Home Day parade. The Old Homestead/OSC parade entry will include Mike and possibly Suzie Johnson in a convertible, along with the oxen and troupe of Old Homestead actors. Barlow, Crowder, and Thieme are successfully training the oxen to drive the Old Homestead cart.

The oxen will be at the Cheshire Fair, likely arriving late on Wednesday, August 1 and leaving mid-day on Friday, August 3. The Fair program features a small illustrated box inviting attendees to

“meet Swanzey’s biggest rural characters – Buck & Ike.” The Open Space Committee will have an information table set up near Buck and Ike, at the oxen barn.

The Adventures of Buck and Ike: The Complete First Season now is available. Sales of plush oxen are strong.

Wildlife Action Plan maps – In progress.

Resource Directory – Diluzio has established a format for capturing contact information for volunteers.

Budget report

To date, the balance in the Open Space Acquisition Fund is \$138,089.14
[\$40,877.26 (balance from 2005) + \$50,000 (balance from 2006) + \$,2137.68 interest
less expenses \$4,925 (paid out in 2006) = \$88,089.14 + \$50,000 (allocated for 2007)]

New business

Completion of the Johnson project review sheet.

Committee members tallied individual responses to resource value rankings. The parcel scores 75% of points possible.

Recreation/Access: average 19 of possible 25

Habitat Diversity and Integrity: average 14.8 of possible 20

Natural Beauty: average 12 of possible 15

Water Quality: average 15.7 of possible 25

Active Agriculture: average 9.8 of possible 10

Community Character: average 7.3 of possible 10

Members also noted the parcel’s importance for protecting resources identified in *the Plan for the Protection of Open Space*, its standing as a priority area in the *Plan*, and its potential to stimulate future projects.

Potential invitation to Ryan Owens to attend the August meeting for project updates and discussion of Monadnock Conservancy approach to land preservation.

By Committee consensus, Barlow will invite Owens. Members will consider questions and discussion points in preparation for the meeting.

Staffing OSC booth

Old Home Day: 9:00 – 12:00, Barlow and Thieme. **Coverage needed from 12:00 to 3:00.**

At the Potash Bowl, before performances and during intermissions of *The Old Homestead*:

Carbonneau will be primary coverage, with help appreciated.

Cheshire Fair: days and times to be determined, with information in a follow-up e-mail message.

Disposition of Cheshire County Farm land in Westmoreland – Carlson attended the 7/9/07 meeting at the Keene Public Library, and reported to the Committee. Delegation members Emerson, Lerandeau, Robertson were present, as well as Dunn, Johnson, and Zerba. Approximately 40 members of public also attended, and were supportive of keeping the land as a farm, and preserving the land. Carlson spoke in support of conservation easements. The Westmoreland Conservation Commission is in favor of preserving the land; the Monadnock Conservancy has been prepared to hold a conservation easement for several years. Next meeting: August 8, 7:00 to

9:00, Keene Public Library, to discuss conservation of the land. Carlson encouraged Committee members to attend.

New assignments

Help with staffing OSC booth at Old Home Day and Cheshire Fair

Minutes of 6/12 meeting

Motion by Thieme to approve the minutes. Second by Winsor. All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Barlow

Johnson Family Farm Conservation Easement
Selectmen's Public Hearing June 27 and July 11, 2007
Swanzy Open Space Committee testimony

The Swanzy Open Space Committee has determined that the +/- 118-acre Johnson parcel holds significant conservation value for the Town of Swanzy. Criteria (shown in **boldface**, below) established in *Swanzy's Plan for the Protection of Open Space* direct the Committee's assessment, and its conclusion that this project is worthy of the expenditure of public funds.

The Johnson parcel ranks high in resource values of **habitat diversity and integrity, natural beauty, and active agriculture**. The forested and stream frontage portions support **recreation/access**. In addition to frontage on the South Branch, the parcel's **water quality** ranking is further increased by the presence of significant wetlands. Regarding **community character** values, the land has been farmed since the time of the Abenakis.

Located in the Martin Brook watershed, the parcel is identified in the State's *Wildlife Action Plan* as having regionally significant wildlife habitat. The *Swanzy Plan for the Protection of Open Space* specifically targets this area as a priority for Swanzy's conservation efforts. The project has clear potential to stimulate future projects.

By unanimous vote on April 10, 2007, members of the Swanzy Open Space Committee have requested that the Monadnock Conservancy offer to Suzie and Mike Johnson a "bargain basement" payment for a conservation easement on the Johnson farm, calculated at approximately 10% of the easement's value as determined by appraisal.

The Open Space Committee respectfully requests that the Board of Selectmen release \$33,625 from the Conservation Land Acquisition capital reserve account, payable to the Monadnock Conservancy, in order for the Conservancy to apply the totality of these funds towards purchase of the Johnson easement.

The Open Space Committee also respectfully requests that the Selectmen release additional funds, in an amount to be determined by the Monadnock Conservancy and in accordance with Town policy, to cover the usual costs associated with the easement transaction. These costs include an environmental hazard assessment, title search, recording fees, legal fees, title search, survey, and a payment to cover the Monadnock Conservancy's perpetual monitoring of the easement.

The Swanzy Conservation Commission and Swanzy Planning Board have formally endorsed the project and its costs.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Barlow, chair
Swanzy Open Space Committee

