

# Swanзей Conservation Commission [SCC] Minutes

February 7, 2011

4:00 p.m. at town hall

[Note: Minutes are not final until approved by the Commission, usually at its next meeting.]

Call to order by vice-chair at 4:05 p.m.

SCC members present: Gary Coburn, Deb Crowder, Bob Goodrich, Mike Morrison [had to leave ca. 4:15 to work with students, back ca. 5:45], Steve Stepenuck [vice-chair]

## 1. Reports of Related Committees [taken up first by request]:

### a. Open Space Committee [OSC]: Deb introduced

(1) a letter from the OSC thanking the SCC for its financial support of the OSC's efforts over the past five years. The letter also pledged OSC physical support of SCC projects, such as trail building and maintenance, river and roadside cleanups, etc. SCC members expressed their thanks to the OSC for this communication.

(2) a request from the Monadnock Conservancy for funding of \$12,150 to pay for staff time, legal costs, stewardship, etc. for a Carroll and Elizabeth Tolman conservation easement on ~61A near Westbrook Court. While SCC members expressed thanks and support for the OSC's efforts, and for the conservation of valuable open space, some members expressed serious concern that they were again being asked to sign a "blank check," particularly with respect to guaranteed public access, possible restrictions thereto, or other restrictions on use of the property. With all respect to the landowners' wishes, public funds are involved. Concern was also expressed at what appeared to be a pattern of pressure to grant the funds instantly, with very little information, and/or not having received requested information.

After nearly a full hour of discussion, it was moved [Stepenuck] and seconded [Coburn] to grant the funding, accompanied by the following statement:

The Conservation Commission has been and is very supportive of the work of the Open Space Committee and the Monadnock Conservancy, and wishes to support land conservation efforts, including this one. However, with past projects in this area, we have had serious concerns relative to public access and the specific wording of the actual easements signed.

Therefore, we vote to approve this expenditure, but hereby state that in any future funding requests for

conservation easements, we expect to see any limitations on public access clearly defined before we approve the request.

**Voted:** Yes: 4      No: 0      Abstain: 0      Absent: 3

**b. ARLAC:** Steve reported that he had attended the public hearing on the new bridges to be built on the Warmac Road and Cobble Hill Rd., representing the CC and ARLAC. He said he was pleased to report that both will be open, natural-bottomed structures in accord with current DES recommendations, so as to encourage natural movement of creatures in the respective streams. He also requested of the engineer representing Hoyle-Tanner that provision please be made for a parking turnout near each bridge, to enhance public safety for people fishing, taking pictures, inspecting the bridge, etc., since any parked vehicle now blocks traffic. The engineer took some notes, and said that was part of the reason for public hearings.

He distributed copies of the booklet "Fish and Wildlife Friendly Culvert Restoration Guidance" to those present, and had distributed same to the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board before the hearing.

He also reported that Keene is still requesting substantial exemption from the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act.

ARLAC might have a February snowshoe hike on the River headwaters, but that won't be known until its next meeting, Feb. 15.

**c. South West Regional Planning Natural Resources committee:** No meeting.

**2. Treasury report:** A final report of expenses was shown. \$1600.76 was spent in 2010.

**3. Permits and Applications:** No new ones. ☺

A "Request for more information" letter from DES to South Branch Group [File 2007-00224] (M/L 86/2) was outlined. Assurance of compliance with new stream-crossing rules is sought.

**4. Projects:**

**a.** A snowshoe trip up Mt. Cresson during February school vacation was proposed by Chair Day [in absentia]. It was moved and seconded to authorize Mr. Day to organize, lead, and publicize this trip. Members will help where they can.

**Voted:** Yes: 4      No: 0      Abstain: 0      Absent: 3

**b. Mt. Cresson Trail Work:** Due to the heavy snowpack, it was decided to postpone consideration of a date for this until the March meeting.

#### **4. Projects, continued:**

**c. Roadside cleanup:** A date of Saturday April 23 was selected. No "project manager" was appointed. Deb will do publicity. Steve and Mike M. will get gloves and bags. Further details deferred to March meeting.

**d. Canoe trip:** Saturday May 14, 2011 was selected for this event. Details to March meeting.

#### **5. Mail:** [to be returned to SCC mail slot]

**a.** Application packet and schedule for the Green Mountain Conservation Camp was received.

**b.** LGC's publication Town and City was received.

**c.** SWRPC's Highlights publication for Dec. and Jan. were received.

#### **6. Minutes:** No minutes were available.

**7. Other business:** Suggestion that OSC look into acquiring an easement on part or all of the former "Canyon Springs" property was made, but no action was taken.

**8.** A motion to adjourn was approved by acclamation at 6:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Stepenuck, secretary pro-tem