

## Open Space Committee

April 14, 2009 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, Theresa DiLuzio, Katherine Feist, Jeanne Thieme, Dan Zeh. Town Planner Sara Carbonneau also was present.

### CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Correction to page 2 of March 17, 2009 minutes, proposed by DiLuzio, who reports that there are no cellar holes that she is aware of on the Mt. Caesar property:

Conservation priorities The group devoted most of the meeting to assessing reasons to pursue, challenges and obstacles, and likely next steps to take regarding several major conservation opportunities in Swanzey.

*Mt. Caesar:* Group members agreed that the property held in the Carpenter trust has many qualities that recommend its permanent protection:

- Geographically central location
- Symbolic and emotional importance to townspeople
- Proximity to schools
- Historical ~~cellar holes~~, stone walls
- Potential to be part of a cross-town wildlife corridor that might extend as far as the Yale-Toumey Forest, Pisgah, and Gap Mountain

Motion by Feist to approve, as corrected, the minutes of March 17, 2009 meeting. Second by Thieme. All in favor.

### MEETING INFORMATION

Members received the following:

- Revised budget and workplan
- Copy of 3/19/09 letter to Planning Board requesting establishment of a working group to consider revisions of the zoning map (Planning Board members agreed to the formation of the workgroup on 3/19/09, and scheduled the first meeting for April 28, 2009 at 4:00 p.m., Town Hall.)
- Estimated cost breakdown of the Monadnock Conservancy's expenses for the Johnson easement (survey now in process)
- Revised project rating sheet, prepared by Zeh
- Handout provided at OSC workshop, Society for the Protection of NH Forests "Saving Special Places" conference, April 3
- Draft notes compiled from Wessels "Reading the Forested Landscape" hike, April 6. (Letter acknowledging Wessels's charitable donation was mailed 4/9/09.)
- Handout distributed at Growing Our Own yoke-'em-up meeting, April 7; notes from the meeting
- Copy of e-mail correspondence with Friends of Open Space in Keene (Carbonneau has asked to borrow a 9 ¾ -minute DVD produced by the group: "Open Space - Keene's Natural Resources Why is it Important?" The DVD cost approximately \$3,000 to produce.)
- Memo to Economic Development Advisory Committee, prepared in response to invitation "to contribute to bringing into focus what EDAC has been challenged to do" and presented at the 4/13/09 EDAC meeting

- Thank-you note from Dee Robbins
- Invitation to a May 2 community party, Parade and Pudding, beginning at 1:00 p.m. at the Johnson farm

## NEW BUSINESS

Budget reconsideration The group discussed proposed revisions to the budget and workplan, designed to scale back Committee work to \$6,000. Members concurred that it may be necessary to eliminate Buck and Ike's appearance at the Cheshire Fair, as well as a fourth postcard mailing.

Stewards of Mt. Caesar Advisory Committee introduction and progress report DiLuzio said that the Committee was created by the Board of Selectmen in response to her concerns regarding types of use and deterioration of Mt. Caesar trails. Along with DiLuzio, members include Dan Zeh, Bruce Bohannon, Mike Lilly, and Jeff Goller. The group will solicit public comment, and make recommendations to the Selectmen regarding uses and restrictions for the public trails.

DiLuzio described the important values the Mt Caesar parcel provides for the community: a large natural area in a central location, with historic features, important wildlife habitat, and close proximity to the schools. She said that MRHS science teacher John Samparesi hopes to direct students to Mt. Caesar for GIS mapping activities in a new town-school collaboration that could yield an existing conditions map of the entire Mt. Caesar area. In the short term, DiLuzio said that the group has applied for a NH Public Service grant of \$648 to finance signage and construction of a gate to limit access to trails by motorized wheeled vehicles – the greatest cause of trail erosion. The group will present its first report to the Board of Selectmen on April 15.

Carbonneau reported that B. Kahn, Monadnock Happy Trails Association, has contacted her with the group's offer to help out on trail projects in Swanzey.

Eastern wood turtle research Zeh presented maps, photographs, and a description of a project designed to track habitat use and range of eastern wood turtles, a species of concern. The two research sites are farmland owned by Mike Johnson that has been in agricultural use without significant alteration since 1913 (Swanzey) and for several hundred years (Richmond). Zeh said that some individual turtles in the study area already are identified by year of discovery (one bears the date 1972, carved in the shell with an artist's scribe). An Antioch/NE Graduate School student, Mari Clemmer, will work on the project as her thesis. NH Fish & Game has expressed enthusiasm for the research, which will have two major components: The researchers will locate turtles, examine their condition, and weigh, photograph, and mark them. Five at each site will be equipped with transmitters, to determine how the turtles use their habitat.

Zeh said that successful grant applications have funded purchase of one set of equipment, and said that he hopes to have a second set for the second research site so that two workers can collect data simultaneously. He said that his request for funding from the Richmond Conservation Commission had been unsuccessful; he will approach the Swanzey Conservation Commission at their April meeting.

Zoning workgroup Barlow and Crowder plan to take part in the work. Zeh offers to support the group by providing maps.

Belding field workday On Saturday, April 18, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Thieme has organized a day of fence repair and brush clearing.

Roadside cleanup The SCC's annual cleanup takes place on April 25, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Workers gather at Town Hall.

Easement celebration party planning Group members reviewed final details and assignments. *Everyone:* Encourage RSVPs; arrive at 1:00 for set-up (bring a change of clean clothes!); bring daffodils in vases, if available from home gardens; participate in take-down.

*Carbonneau*: bring coffee-making supplies and equipment, if weather warrants  
*Zeh*: serve as event photographer; bring maps, including 5 iterations of Industrial Park area  
*Feist*: punch preparation and presentation; purchase and presentation of small pots of pansies to decorate tables; procure boutonnieres for honored guests; bring paper goods; present gift baskets  
*DiLuzio*: present gift baskets  
*Thieme*: prepare to serve as master of ceremonies; prepare comments for Pullen easement; bring easel to display paintings; table linens  
*Barlow*: pick up gift baskets and bring to celebration; bring jugs of water; prepare a guest book and bring a tall table; prepare OSC name tags; prepare comments for Moore Nanotechnology easement; contact Mannion re serving platters

SRC movie Barlow presented bookmarks and postcards, to be bulk mailed at the beginning of May.

#### IMPORTANT DATES

April 21 Annual **easement celebration party** KSC Camp, 4:00 - 6:00  
April 28 First meeting of Planning Board workgroup to determine how the Town "might encourage an appropriate style of commercial development along Route 10 that might also minimize impacts of development on Yale Forest" (3/19/09 PB minutes).  
May 3 Parade and Pudding at Mike Johnson's farm, 1:00 until the pudding is gone  
May 30 **Premiere of "Swanzy Rural Character"** MRHS auditorium, 4:00 and 7:00.  
May 31 Buck and Ike's birthday party Potash Bowl, 1:00 to 3:00  
July 17, 18, 19 *The Old Homestead*  
July 19 **Old Home Day**  
September 12 **Humane Society Walk for Animals**  
October 3 **MRHS homecoming**

#### BUDGET REPORT

Approximately \$3,000 remains in the year's budget. Major expenses to date are as follows:  
\$150 Keene State College camp rental, easement celebration party  
\$485 Brochures/DVD inserts - Buck and Ike  
\$450 Pullen postcard bulk mailing  
\$605 Pullen postcard printing  
\$459 Buck and Ike postcard printing  
\$697 Buck and Ike events postcard bulk mailing

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion** to adjourn by Zeh; second by Thieme. The meeting adjourned at 6:30.

#### NEXT MEETING

Next regular meeting: May 12, 2009, 5:00 p.m., Town Hall. Easement celebration party, April 21.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Reck Barlow, Chair