

Swanzy Open Space Committee

12/9/08 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 5:05 p.m.

Attendance: Victoria Barlow, Theresa DiLuzio, Katherine Feist, Bruce Tatro, Dan Zeh. Town Planner Sara Carbonneau also was present. Absent were Deb Crowder, Jeanne Thieme.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Motion by DiLuzio to approve the minutes of November 11, 2008 and the November 22, 2008 retreat. Second by Feist. All in favor.

MEETING INFORMATION

Members received the following by e-mail prior to the meeting:

- Suggestion for an ag lands map data layer from Zeh
- Press release regarding LCHIP grant opportunity
- Submission to *Swanzy Uncovered* regarding availability of fund-raising DVDs
- OSC letter to Keene *Sentinel*; response from editor explaining how the letter fails to meet *Sentinel* policies
- Letter to Keene *Sentinel* expressing gratitude for Buck and Ike's participation in MRHS Homecoming festivities
- Fact sheet on town forests (submitted by DiLuzio)
- Copy of insert of a thank-you card sent to Buck and Ike's friends in business and the arts
- Text of thank-you note to Bob Bernstein, Land for Good
- Text of note to Dick and Barbara Pullen, accompanying Zeh's map

At the 12/8/08 meeting, members received a cover letter outlining requested action regarding

- A draft report listing 2008 OSC accomplishments
- A draft worksheet regarding OSC proposed or anticipated activities for 2009

Barlow reported three additional pieces of information:

- 1) Placement of a purchase order for 2,000 "Swanzy Rural Character" buttons
- 2) Request for payment of OSC purchase of 50 plush oxen from the Old Homestead Committee OXEN fund.
- 3) Permission granted to use Recycling Center's moveable type sign, to be located outside of Town Hall, to advertise availability of the new Buck and Ike DVD, "New Adventures"

5:15 – 5:45 REPORT FROM MONADNOCK CONSERVANCY'S COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP'S CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP TRAINING (DiLuzio, Zeh)

DiLuzio and Zeh reported that the training took students step by step through every conceivable aspect of conservation easements. Information included evolution of the MC and Harris Center approaches, contacts of people who are available to answer lingering questions, and case studies. Students received binders of data, handbooks, and references. Reading was required prior to each session.

DiLuzio and Zeh elaborated on the MC's approach to conservation priorities: operating practices, selection criteria and process, land trust-town considerations, and requirements of

documentation of public benefit for IRS purposes. The MC continues in its reluctance to enter into easements on land owned by homeowners' associations, as with a conservation residential subdivision, and instead continues to recommend deed restrictions in these situations.

DiLuzio and Zeh talked about what they learned about issues that can make it impossible to accept a proposed easement, including insufficient funds or manpower, and lack of "fit" of the project into the town's or land trust's conservation scheme. Discussion also included making initial contacts with landowners, establishing boundaries of responsibilities, and handling expectations regarding project costs and tax incentives. DiLuzio reminded OSC members about the importance of referring landowners with tax questions to their accountants.

The group discussed the role in conservation of town forests, and Town benefits of owning land (including reduced requirements for provision of services and income – potentially significant – from timber harvest, as well as protecting wildlife habitat and providing for recreational uses). Carbonneau informed the group that the Mount Cresson land is a statutory Town forest. OSC members asked about the disposition of income from Mt. Cresson timber sales.

DiLuzio and Zeh also discussed the stewardship challenges created by regime changes in a municipality; the requirements of IRS code to show that easements protect land for the public good; and the necessity of taking initiative in exploring possibilities for open space protection.

The group discussed situations in which land trusts make outright purchases of open space or of bargain easements. Carbonneau advised the group that a copy of the NH-DES innovative land use manual is on file in her office and is available for review.

(Immediately following the meeting, Zeh e-mailed members with additional materials received during Community Conservation Partnership conservation leadership training:

- program course description
- training schedule and outline
- notes from sessions
- enrollment contact list
- Peterborough parcel rating form)

5:45 – 6:45 MAPPING DATA (ZEH)

Zeh presented a mapped segment of Swanzey, depicting land in the vicinity of Wilson Pond and showing Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) prioritized habitat, WAP habitat types, WAP unfragmented areas, aquifer transmissivity, and Swanzey conservation priorities. Zeh noted that Swanzey contains most of the WAP's important wildlife habitats.

OSC members reviewed and discussed the information, its implications for open space protection, ways to coordinate planning for open space protection with other Town boards and committees, and additional maps that would facilitate planning decisions. As time permits, Zeh offered to develop map sheets (using parameters similar to those used to portray the Wilson Pond area) showing other portions of Swanzey.

BUDGET REPORT

To date, the balance in the Open Space Acquisition Capital Reserve Account is \$92,464.14
[\$40,877.26 (balance from 2005) + \$50,000 (balance from 2006) + \$2,137.68 interest
less expenses \$4,925 (paid out in 2006) = \$88,089.14 + \$50,000 (allocated for 2007) less
\$33,625 allocation for purchase of Johnson easement and \$12,000 for Perry Farm transaction

costs. Projected pending expenses: Johnson transaction costs like will be on the order of \$15,000 ~ \$20,000.

\$1,303.29 (19.8%) remains in the administrative account. Major expenses are as follows:

\$535 printing 3,500 copies of the Perry Farm postcard

\$441.11 bulk-mailing Perry Farm postcard

\$285 printing 1,000 copies of the new Buck and Ike brochure

\$530 printing 1,000 note cards (which have served as easement celebration invitations)

\$590 printing Buck and Ike's appearances postcard

\$785.22 easement celebration party: postage, invitations, facility rental, gift baskets, paper goods, catering, flowers

\$200 trucking Buck and Ike to the Walk for Animals; to the Potash Bowl

\$300 trucking Buck and Ike to the Potash Bowl; to the Cheshire Fair

\$293.80 1,000 Swanzey Rural Character buttons

\$150 trucking Buck and Ike to Chesterfield; Monadnock Conservancy annual meeting

\$250 to reimburse the hay fund for Buck and Ike's birthday gift plush oxen.

Upcoming expenses, to be paid out from the administrative account (2008 invoices due by 12/19/08):

\$539.50 for 2,000 additional Swanzey Rural Character buttons + shipping

\$250 for plush oxen to distribute at Buck and Ike's 2009 birthday party

\$168 for 400 stamps (for invitations to 2009 easement celebration party)

\$60 (approximate) for printing maps for OSC planning, presentation to PB, SCC

(\$285.79 balance remaining)

(NB: Please distinguish the Open Space Acquisition Capital Reserve Account – managed by the Selectmen ~ from the Conservation Fund. The Conservation Fund, which is managed by the Conservation Commission, includes income from the Current Use change tax.)

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Feist. Second by Zeh. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Next regular meeting: January 13, 5:00 p.m., Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Reck Barlow, Chair