

Swanzy Open Space Committee

8/12/08 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, Deb Crowder, Theresa DiLuzio, Katherine Feist, Bruce Tatro, Dan Zeh.

STATUS OF CURRENT LAND PROTECTION PROJECTS (project manager)

Johnson easement (Barlow, filling in for Thieme)

On August 5, Thieme, Barlow, and the Monadnock Conservancy's Owens, Throop, and McBride met in Brattleboro with Joan Weir, Regional Director of the Southeast and Mountain Valley Office of the Vermont Land Trust. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss approaches to agricultural easements on working farms. In addition, Weir encouraged the group to look beyond immediate issues of easement details and consider the long-term disposition of farmland: What can towns do to help keep farms productive?

Pullen (DiLuzio) - Throop (Monadnock Conservancy) has contact the OSC to ask whether the Town can consider assisting with transaction costs for this project - specifically, to help pay for the survey, very roughly estimated in the \$7,000 range. The Pullens understand that the Town likely would ask to hold an executory interest in the easement. The MC hopes to complete the project by the end of September.

MOTION by Feist to begin the project assessment by conducting a site walk of the parcel at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 16. Second by Crowder. All in favor.

Tax Parcel Map 32 Lot 4, Carlton Road.

At their July 9, 2008 business meeting, Selectmen agreed that the Town generally does not seek out purchases of land; furthermore, the fair market value of the parcel may be difficult to determine. Selectmen suggested that the owner might deed the parcel over to the Town, with the Town assuming all expenses of the transfer. The owner would benefit by being released from ownership and property taxes, at no cost. The Board suggested that the Open Space Committee contact Realtor Greg Curry to discuss this option.

Committee members concurred with this approach, and asked Barlow to contact Curry.

Troy Hill holdings on Hale Hill Road, Old Richmond Road

Thieme has contacted Dick Fraser, from the real estate development company that is marketing the parcels, to determine whether the owners would consider the sale of pieces of the whole, and to ascertain whether conservation of some portion might be an option. Fraser will discuss these possibilities with the landowners.

LIAISON REPORTS

SM - no report

PB - no report

Conservation Commission (SCC) - The SCC is invited to meet with the Board of Selectmen at 7:45 on September 3. SCC Chairman Stepenuck will present results of river monitoring.

Capital Improvements Program Committee (CIP) – The Committee has developed a project ranking system, and has been testing the system by evaluating road repair projects. Future meetings will address facilities, as well as financing open space protection.

OS Advisory – report deferred.

STATUS OF ASSIGNMENTS + PROJECTS

Web page – report deferred.

Project management worksheet, communications log – no activity.

Protection of 3 town-owned parcels – no activity.

Town land purchase/easement management – The subdivision update workgroup continues to meet regularly, and is compiling its first draft of the amended regulations.

Buck and Ike – Performances of *The Old Homestead* went well. Barlow drove the team with the cart, and Thieme drove the yoked team for curtain calls. The oxen graciously received the adoration of their young fans during rehearsals and while waiting for performances.

The oxen were available to the public on Old Home Day. The warm day and unforgiving pavement prompted a decision to walk only a portion of the parade route, so Buck and Ike were able to review (and be reviewed by) the entire parade until they stepped into their position at its very end. Numerous politicians seized the opportunity to pose for quick photographs with the oxen. Thieme drove for the parade, with Mike Johnson, OSC members and 11-year-old Kelly Gordon joining the team.

Richmond residents Jennifer Marques and her family conducted a fundraising raffle for Buck and Ike on Old Home Day, generating a \$107 donation as well as \$50 in donations and net sales of plush oxen.

Buck and Ike represented the Town's open space protection efforts on Thursday, July 31 at the Cheshire Fair. The team took second place as "best matched team" in their weight class, and last place in an obstacle course designed for midgets. Since their 2007 visit to the fairground scale, Buck has gained 97 pounds, and Ike has gained 25 pounds. The team now weighs 6,032 pounds. Crowder and Barlow staffed the team, with able assistance from 13-year-old Dana Mannion. OSC Advisory member Krisch staffed the booth, with help from DiLuzio and Feist.

To help promote these events, Barlow submitted two letters to the editor of the *Keene Sentinel*. Neither was printed.

A new DVD of Buck and Ike's adventures ("Next Adventures") nears completion; cover art will feature Thieme's painting of the team pulling the *Old Homestead* hay cart in the 2007 Old Home Day parade. Twenty-one of the episodes have been uploaded for viewing on YouTube.com.

For the past two weeks, Dana Mannion has been exercising the team with light obstacle course work and training walks.

Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) maps (Zeh)

On July 16, Frank Mitchell and Amanda Stone (UNH-CE Land and Water Conservation Program) met with OSC members to discuss next steps in the project. OSC members learned that only three municipalities *in the State* have been selected for this technical assistance in using the Wildlife Action Plan for natural resource and land conservation planning, and also learned that Extension staff is using OSC-proposed scope and approach as their framework for providing the assistance. Mitchell and Stone are collaborating with the Monadnock Conservancy and Southwest Region Planning Commission as they work with Swanzey, Keene and Alstead, and are developing a

template for other communities to adapt. In the fall, UNH-CE will select three more communities to work with, starting in early 2009.

Mitchell and Stone brought high-resolution maps of Swanze data, and taught the Committee how to interpret the data. The WAP shows critical forest floodplain, marsh and shrub wetlands and peatlands along the Ashuelot River, South Branch, and Martin Brook, creating areas of highest ranked wildlife habitat by ecological condition in New Hampshire. The group discussed bringing the information to Swanze citizens, and decided to conduct a session to explore suitable locations for development, based on WAP data.

Feist suggested inviting Douglas Cuddletoy (maker of the Buck and Ike plush oxen) to donate a basket of plush animals for a door prize or raffle item.

Resource Directory - no activity.

OLD BUSINESS

Swanze Rural Character: The Movie

Throughout Old Home Day and during *Old Homestead* rehearsals and intermissions, the film crew for "Swanze Rural Character - The Movie" conducted interviews. The crew also has collected footage at the Cheshire Fair, Gomarlo's, Wilson Pond, the Town's covered bridges, Carpenter Home, Town Hall, and Mt. Caesar Library.

The 55 interviews to date include

Charlie Beaugard, Barbara Brown, Jean Blood, Rich Busick, Jed Butterfield
Walt Calkins, Sara Carbonneau, Nancy Carlson, Rob Colbert, Liz Colby, Stacey Cole
Deb Davis, Bob DeJong, Hannah Dettelback, Lee Dunham, Barry Dwyer
Jerome Ebbighausen, Stanley Earle
Mary Faulkner, Katherine Feist, Beth Fox
Heather Gigliello, Arden Goodwin, Taylor Goodwin
Peg Hanrahan, Louise Hill, McKenna Hill, Mitchell Hill, Mason Hill
Carol Jeffrey
Dave Krisch
Linda Lamothe, Grace Lilly, Eileen Longe, Craig Lougee
Evan McCutcheon, Lily McCutcheon, Melissa McCutcheon, Sarah Mucci, Adam Mucci
Ernest Perry, Brian Pickering, Autumn Prunier
Rachel Schneir, Margaret Smead, Doug Smith, Hanna Stanley, Olivia Stanley
Bruce Tatro, Keith Thibault, Molly Thieme, Jeanne Thieme, Michael Thomas, Paul Thomas,
Carroll Tolman
Karen Zitta

Intended are interviews with Gerry Babonis, Jerry Bell, Bob Beaugard, Ken Colby, Deb Crowder (second take), Roger Conroy, Theresa DiLuzio, Ken Ervin, Maxine Houle, Bill Hutwelker, Mike Johnson, Colleen Mason, Dave Mason, Garth McGrath, Mike Morrison, Jim Kahn and his sister Kathy, Emily Kerylow, Lewis Kibler, Cynthia Brown Richards, Fire Chief Symonds, Mike Thieme, Dan Zeh. Mike Johnson telling ghost stories to a group of young children.

Unanticipated by-products:

Producer Bruce Barlow has created disks of unedited footage of seven long interviews to give to the interview participants and their children, and has submitted the DVDs to the Swanze Historical Museum for archival.

Director and editor MRHS senior Evan Barlow has created a half-hour film, "A New Vision for Monadnock Regional High School." The video features an introduction by Selectman Tatro, a long uncut interview with new MRHS principal Brian Pickering, and interviews with department heads discussing changes coming to the high school and the teacher contract vote on September 9. Cheshire TV will begin airing the film on August 18.

Orton Family Foundation visit On July 16, Betsy Rosenbluth and Ariana McBride visited to learn more about Swanzey's approach to celebrating and protecting the town's rural character.

Zeh created a map with points of interest to direct an hour-long tour of the Town, conducted from Selectman Carlson's van. The group followed the tour with a lunch of Swanzey-grown meat, eggs, milk, vegetables and fruit in the upstairs meeting room of the Mt. Caesar Library. During the meal, the "Swanzey Rural Character" film crew recorded responses to the questions 1) What makes Swanzey a great town? and 2) What can we do to make it better? Special guests Selectman Nancy Carlson, Town Administrator Beth Fox, Town Planner Sara Carbonneau, Police Chief Rich Busick, and Cheshire YMCA CEO Bob DeJong each gave a five-minute response for the film. (Planning Board member Scott Self also was invited, but unexpectedly was unable to attend.)

The visit concluded with a discussion of Swanzey's approach, and opportunities for Orton Foundation involvement.

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.

\$1,762.74 (26.8%) remains in the "office account." Major expenses are as follows:

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

\$441.11 bulk-mailing the 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

Upcoming expenses, to be paid out from the office account:

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

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

\$400 total known upcoming expenses; remaining balance approximately \$1,362.74

(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.)

NEW BUSINESS

Chapter 482-A:28 Fill and Dredge in Wetlands; Aquatic Resource Compensatory Mitigation

To help the OSC and SCC better understand the law's application for open space protection, Carbonneau arranged for Lori Sommers (NH-DES) to conduct a workshop on Tuesday, July 22 at the Keene Public Library. OSC and SCC members attended.

OSC members devoted the majority of the meeting to discussing a memo from Town Planner Carbonneau and Town Administrator Fox detailing the law's policy implications for the Town. The Committee's consensus is appended to the memo, attached to these minutes.

OSC and SCC members will hold a joint session at 6:00 on Tuesday, August 26 to finalize, by formal vote, a coordinated statement of recommended policy regarding compensatory wetlands mitigation practices for the Town of Swanzey.

Other business as may be required

"Swanzey Rural Character" buttons

MRHS senior Evan Barlow has designed a new button, featuring Crowder's 2007 portrait of Buck and Ike. The buttons are available at Town Hall.

Monadnock Conservancy annual meeting

The meeting will be held on Saturday morning, August 23, from 8:30 to 11:15, at Chesterfield Town Hall. Ernest Hebert will be guest speaker. Buck and Ike plan to attend.

MOTION by Zeh to designate Town Planner Carbonneau as recipient of MC recognition. Second by Tatro. All in favor.

Extension until 12/09 of federal tax benefits for conserving land

The incentive raises the deduction for a conservation easement from 30% of income in any year to 50%; allows farmers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and increases the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from 6 to 16 years.

MINUTES 6/10/08 meeting

MOTION to approve by Zeh, second by DiLuzio. All in favor.

NEW ASSIGNMENTS

Review the Carbonneau-Fox memo in preparation for the August 26 SCC-OSC joint meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m. Next regular meeting: September 9

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Barlow