

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Open Space Committee (OSC)
Meeting Minutes – June 8, 2016

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

Present at Meeting: Chair Ames called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Present were Victoria Reck Ames, Jeanne Thieme, Sharon Greatbatch, Theresa DiLuzio

Also present: Steve Stepenuck (Conservation Commission member)

Absent: Selectmen's Representative Ken Colby

Minutes of March 9, 2016 site visit and regular meeting: **Motion** to approve by Thieme. Second by Greatbatch. **Motion carries.**

Agenda items

Windyhurst project -- Map 72 Lot 43

Members reviewed the May 31, 2016 (e-mail) project update from Monadnock Conservancy conservation project manager Stacy Gambrel:

Monadnock Conservancy staff recently met Stuart Adams and NRCS staff at the property for a site visit, which is a requirement of the ALE grant program. We are moving ahead smoothly with the tasks that ALE requires. At this point, I am still very much focused on securing funds for the project. The 'meat' of the project (easement drafting, etc) will not begin until after we have our funding lined up. The next step is to apply for LCHIP funding. Applications are due June 24. We will be seeking 50% of the easement value (around \$150k) from LCHIP. LCHIP awards will be announced in late November.

At some point, I will want to come back to the Cons Comm and Open Space Committee for a formal funding request to help cover transaction costs of the project. However, I don't think this will happen until after I learn whether we've been funded by LCHIP.

I'll continue to keep you posted. Thanks for your interest in and support for this project.

Members considered the following proposed motion:

That the Swanzey Open Space Committee supports the Monadnock Conservancy's acquisition of a conservation easement on 67 acres of farm land owned by the Windyhurst Farm Partnership on South Winchester Street in Swanzey and furthermore that the OSC endorses the Monadnock Conservancy's pursuit of funding from the State's LCHIP Program and hopes that their fundraising efforts are successful.

Discussion focused on questions about the methodology used by the real estate appraiser to calculate the appraised value of the property, and the resulting expense budgeted for acquiring the easement. Issues of concern about the appraisal methodology included

- appropriateness of comparable sales
- road frontage
- limitations imposed by Ashuelot River floodplain & Shoreland Protection District
- current quality of soil.

It was noted that a proposed financial contribution from the Town would help to fund transaction costs (legal, survey, etc.), which are fixed expenses regardless of the appraised value of the property.

Prior to taking action on the proposed motion, members decided to invite project manager Gambrel to attend a special OSC meeting on June 15* (given the June 24 LCHIP submission deadline) to provide more information about the appraisal methodology.

OSC membership At the next OSC meeting, members agreed to consider restoring OSC membership to five regular members. Town staff advises that this would entail making a request to the Board of Selectmen.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ames to adjourn; Greatbatch seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Motion carries. Adjournment occurred at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Reck Ames
Recording Secretary

*Per June 9, 2016 follow-up telephone conversation: Gambrel's earliest availability is July 20. Gambrel will submit the LCHIP grant application without a statement of OSC support of the project.