

Weare Open Space Committee
Minutes
November 22, 2005
+++++FINAL+++++

In attendance were: John Ciampi, Steve Najjar, Andrea Aldernman, George Malette, Paul Spragg, and Mike Boyko.

Guest this evening was Paul Doscher of the Forest Society.

The chair called the meeting to order at 7 P.M.

Minutes of October 25, 2005 – The minutes of October 25, 2005 were reviewed by Committee members, and the following changes were made:

- In the title *Ferrante Property*, 13th line down, change *Meadows and Timberlands* to *Meadowsend Timberlands*.
- In the same heading, 18th line down, strike *playing field* and insert *in order to extend their property for other uses*.
- In the same heading, 3rd line up from bottom, change *Meadows and Timberlands* to *Meadowsend Timberland*.
- Under the heading *Conservation Commission Meeting*, remove the entire paragraph and record it separately. This topic shall be included with the Conservation Commission minutes.

John made motion to accept the minutes as amended, and Mike 2nd. All voted in favor, and the minutes of 10-25-05 become final.

Oliphant Property – Mike stated that a \$1600.00 price tag was given by Ross Phelps of Armstrong Consulting Firm to review Tom Oliphant's appraisal written up by a Mr. Kraft. Henry Tiffany, a neighbor of Tom, is willing to contribute \$600.00 to assist in the appraisal review. However, Mike stated he did not pursue an appraisal from Mr. Phelps because of a long time frame involved, and suggested we seek another appraiser. Steve recommended asking an appraiser named Scott Dickman to execute the Oliphant appraisal, and Steve also volunteered to dispatch several phone calls in order to secure a pool of appraisers for the Oliphant Property. Paul Doscher suggested Scott Heath of Manchester, but Steve felt that his appraisal with other properties was less than adequate. Mike ventured to contact Mr. Heath anyway, considering the present ordeal of obtaining a suitable appraisal within the required time frame. Before approaching an appraiser, Mike noted, it is important to delineate the desires of the Committee, so that the Committee's objectives are not overlooked. Steve mentioned we will need an appraisal for a conservation easement, and a price for the property itself, and hopefully Henry will make up the difference. Paul Doscher left open the possibility that Mr. Oliphant may want to build a house on the remaining acreage, to which Steve pondered if it would be a wise investment for anyone to purchase 50 acres of land with a single house. To his query, Paul stated that would be up to the potential developer, but, be added, that type of land purchase has become more popular as of late, although still limited. Mike asked

“what would happen if the amount of money being spent on the appraisal, \$1000.00, was exceeded?” Steve replied that if that were to happen, the OSC would then again approach the WCC and ask for more funds. Steve made mention that the important issue for this property is the “dirt road factor” and what it will ultimately cost to pave it. Mr. Doscher suggested, in reference to the appraisal, to ask for a before and after conservation easement limited restricted appraisal, but a full appraisal report may be needed if the Town reaches agreement with the landowner. Steve broached the Conservation Fund topic, indicating its coffer is wildly ranging, between \$400K to \$600K, therefore application is needed to determine a more accurate figure. Paul stated that a template for a potential easement can be drawn from the LCHIP or Forest Society model because they are very similar to each other.

Ferrante Property – Steve noted that last night he and Andy attended a non public session with the BOS, and they presented a power point presentation. This reception went favorably, especially since there were no hard line dissenters. A public BOS gathering will be scheduled at a future date. One salient inquiry during this session was “if you want to float a bond to purchase 600 acres, what committees and persons do you want to invite to this meeting?” In response to that statement, the Open Space Committee members suggested: the Finance Committee; the abutters of this property; Neal Kurk, Town moderator; Margaret Watkins of the PWA; Dijit Taylor of the Center for Land Conservation; and Carol Hall of the Russell Foundation. Steve also mentioned that the Select Board is favorable to placing a conservation easement on this property. General discussion then ensued on this topic, and the following points were discussed:

- The price of the property, and the fact that it can go lower.
- The number of house lots Frank thinks he can assign on his land if he were to go that route.
- The various sources of funding.
- If a bond were floated, its impact to the Town over 20 years.
- Generated income as a Town Forest.
- Problems associated with clustering.
- Strategies needed to float a bond.
- Partners involved in the project.
- The end use, as a conservation easement and with John Stark High School.
- The benefits to the Community:
 - a) New Town Forest.
 - b) Open space.
 - c) Unfragmented wildlife land.
- Geological significance.
- Problems with fragmented lands and corridors.

Steve then voiced that no one from the Committee has walked the property. Paul suggested taking photos of the property and using them for a power point presentation, along with narration, at the public meeting. Steve asked Mr. Doscher, in the event the property ends up with the Forest Society, if they could develop a stewardship plan: to which Mr. Doscher replied that wouldn't be a problem. John suggested including press coverage for the public meeting. Paul mentioned that concerning negotiations with Mr. Ferrante, TPL will take care of that matter;

however, Paul cautioned, the OSC should be vigilant on what is transpiring at any given time. At this juncture of the discussion, dialogue focused on the TPL, its operating values, organizational structure, how they are financed, and their sphere on operations. Paul continued that TPL will pay for an appraiser, but it is important that the OSC receive and retain a copy of the appraisal, and to provide a copy to whoever wants to review it, since it will be purchased with public funds. Paul suggested that, even though they are currently poorly funded, it makes good diplomatic sense to apply to LCHIP for assistance, because a) - this potential land purchase is a classical LCHIP issue, and b) - a state representative from Hooksett, David Hess, has recently floored a bill before the House to remove \$7,500,000.00 from the State Surplus Monies to fund the LCHIP program. Steve mentioned that Fish and Game may be a potential funding source. Paul suggested that is critical to mention up front that some portion of this property may revert to John Stark High School, in order to deflect a boomerang reaction as to why this point wasn't more straightforward. Steve reminded the group that time is of essence and there are limited resources to consider. Because of her consummate skill in communication, and interest in conservation matters, Paul suggested contacting Rosemary Conroy, of Weare, to assist in preparing for the public meeting. Steve stated that the Ferrante Property calculates out to 1.7% of the total land mass in Weare, and is #2 in contiguous private ownership.

Adjournment – John made motion to adjourn this evenings meeting, and was 2nd by Mike. All voted in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Recorded as a True Record,

John Ciampi
Recording Secretary

cc:town clerk
Tina Pelletier
BOS
Office Files