

Commission Members: Chair Leanne Miner, Vice Chair Bill Knee, Members Cindy Crane, Rich Cooper, Anne Beliveau, John Carson. Guest Sam Harrison, Open Space Advisory Group

I. WELCOME and CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Miner called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

II. MINUTES

- A. Ms. Crane made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for September 11, 2023. Mr. Knee seconded, and the vote was 5-0.**
- B. Ms. Miner made a motion to release non-public minutes from April 3, 2023. Now that the owner of Map 3, Lot 59 has come forward with a public offer to donate. Ms. Beliveau seconded, and the vote was 5-0.**

III. NEW BUSINESS - Land Conservation – Map 3, Lot 59 Donation/Easement, Spruce Swamp/Oak Ridge Town Forest Easements, Grant Application - Easements (4-66, 4-66-1 (Brown along RR), 4-18, 4-17, 2-151 (parcels between Louise Lane and RR)

Ms. Miner described the project. Joanna Pellerin is prepared to generously donate her 17-acre property (Map 3, Lot 59) located on Beede Hill Road, just north of the Fremont Park Associates Gravel Pit in Fremont NH. The Forest Society has agreed to add several Town Forest parcels (4-66, 4-66-1 (Brown along RR), 4-18, 4-17, 2-151 (parcels between Louise Lane and RR); and the Pellerin parcel to the Oak Ridge Conservation Easement(s).

A. Background: Several Town Forest parcels listed above were acquired through fee simple and donations over the last several years and the Town has voted to designate them all as Town Forest (see map) which totals 51-acres. In February 2023, SELT contacted Fremont Conservation Commission on behalf of Ms. Pellerin regarding parcel 3-59 and provided an evaluation strongly supporting conservation of her land. The Conservation Commission had discussed this project in general in April 2023 and agreed to pursue the project further. The parcel is listed as one of the 10 properties formally added to the 2021 Open Space Plan. Ms. Miner and Mr. Cooper met with the Select Board members September 21, 2023 and all were receptive to the project and offered their support.

B. Map 3, Lot 59 Property Description: 17-acres along Beede Hill Road and stretches all the way back to the Town's Oak Ridge Forest. This property creates a little "notch" in Town land holdings of Oak Ridge Town Forest. The back portion includes the large wetland systems that are part of the larger town holdings and prime wetlands and there are also potential vernal pools in the central portion and front of the property. The abutting Town Oak Ridge Town Forest parcel has that nice trail system that runs right along some of the Pellerin boundary.

***Ms. Pellerin has some expectations that need to be considered: 1) A conservation easement must be achieved as part of her donation. Note that the Forest Society has formally agreed to this. 2) No groundwater extraction wells for the purposes of town water supply will be installed on this property. Members reviewed the pledge to be signed by Ms. Pellerin and supported accepting the pledge once signed.

- C. **Notes:** Before moving forward with formal document preparation such as an agreement, grant proposals, and legal expenditures, the Conservation Commission reviewed funding and vote to go forward or not (Go/No Go).
- a. Cost – Review detailed budget. Although the 17-acre parcel is being offered as a donation, there are project related costs and long-term costs including stewardship endowments, legal fees (Town and Forest Society), title, survey, recording, etc. which will total approximately \$40,000. Members reviewed a detailed budget showing potential grant funds and Town costs.
 - b. Funding –
 - i. Current Use Fund: \$88,247 plus recently received grant funds from Moose Plate Funding (for Map 4, Lot 77 Glen Oakes Expansion)
 - ii. Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership Land Protection Transaction Grant ~\$20,000.
 - c. Members discussed votes to Go or No Go. The Current Use Fund has sufficient funds to do the project. Members also discussed and support submitting a Grant Application due October 5, 2023. Lori Sommer, Coastal Watershed Land Conservation Manager with SELT, has helped Ms. Miner prepare a grant for up to ~\$20K to cover survey cost and legal fees associated with the land donation and Oak Ridge easement amendments. This assumes that Mitchell Survey will provide site survey for 4-17, 4-18, and 2-151 as proposed for \$2,000.
 - d. **Ms. Miner made a motion to move forward with the Pellerin and Spruce Swamp Easements as discussed, reserving up to \$40,000 in Current Use Funds, and submitting a grant which if received will cover approximately \$20,000 in costs. Mr. Knee seconded the motion and the motion passed 5-0.**
 - e. Immediate next steps include inquiries about other grant opportunities. Ms. Miner will reach out to ESRLAC, SELT, and Peter Steckler to see if they have any recommendations.

IV. CONTINUED BUSINESS

- A. Oak Ridge North Timber Harvest - Ms. Miner relayed updates on pre-mobilization efforts including wetland permitting and harvest plans. She expected to receive a formal proposal from Charles Moreno Forestry Consultant to prepare a Forest Management Plan, but it has yet to be received. Most members are familiar with the effort and scope to develop such a plan and agreed that \$1,000 would likely cover the work. **Ms. Beliveau made a motion to approve up to \$1,000 for Moreno Forestry Consultants to prepare a Forest Management Plan for Oak Ridge North. Ms. Miner seconded the motion which passed 5-0.**
- B. Easement Monitoring – None discussed at this meeting.
- C. Grants - Map 4, Lot 77 – Glen Oakes Town Forest Expansion Grant Reports were submitted for Fields Pond and Moose Plate. Moose Plate monies were received in the amount of \$30,000.

V. OTHER DEPARTMENT NEWS

- A. Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) Public Hearing – Ms. Miner provided an overview of the current Variance application coming before the ZBA for a shed to be installed

within a side setback at 59 Sleeper Circle, Map 6, Lot 24-13. Members reviewed mapping presented by Ms. Miner showing location of wetlands and associated buffers. The shed is located in the side setback in order to avoid the wetland and buffer. Members agreed there were no issues or concerns that warranted comment for the ZBA.

- B. Planning Board – Laugh Grow Play Site Plan Review – Ms. Miner provided an overview of this Site Plan, commenting on low impact risk to the aquifer and low impact on water resources. Water loss through evapotranspiration and idling vehicles were of minor concern. After some lively debate, the consensus was to suggest native plantings, adherence to dark sky compliance and consideration to have no lighting at the rear of the building during off hours overnight so as to protect sensitive wildlife (e.g., the moths that feed the birds).

VI. REPORT FOR OPEN SPACE

- A. Report – Mr. Cooper reported on current and future activities including progress on the interpretive trail near the Depot Trail. The group is working on a Fall Hike event. Location and date are to be determined.

VII. ADMINISTRATION

- A. Calendar
 - 1. NHACC Annual Meeting Saturday, November 4.
 - 2. The next meeting is November 6 at 6:30PM.
- B. Correspondence - None
- C. Expenditure Request – None
- D. Administration/Budget –
 - 1. Operating Budget (date)
 - 2. Forest Management (7/30/23) \$23,006
 - 3. Current Use (7/30/23) \$88,247
 - 4. Residual (7/30/23) \$555 (after paying Steckler for Conservation Planning)
 - 5. Arelia Mahoney (7/30/23) \$3,016

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Miner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 PM. Ms. Beliveau seconded the motion, and the vote was 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,



Leanne Miner, Land Use Administrative Assistant