

Whitefield Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2019
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Frank Lombardi called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

Members Present: Frank Lombardi- Chairman, Don LaPlante- Vice Chair, Edith Worcester, Valerie Yelton, Marsha Lombardi and Tina Wright- Secretary.

Members Absent:Ken Jordan

Correspondence:

Barbara Richter called in she is the Executive Director from NHCCA (New Hampshire Conservation Commission Association)

Donald LaPlante brought Barbara Richter up to speed on what the Conservation Commission has been working on with two contiguous parcels of land that the town owns. He told her that a petition was created by voters for a warrant article to vote on at the Town Meeting, Tuesday, March 12, 2019 to make these parcels a town forest. That both pieces of property have been for sale for almost 40 years with no one having any interest. The land is part of the industrial park and the town was given the land by a family who owns large amounts of land in town. As of right now in the Industrial Park the Airport is there, the wood chip plant and Presby Plastic. Most of the land that could be developed there has been developed and the land that we're designating as town forest is probably 50% wetlands. Last year the Town allowed the WEDC (Whitefield Economic Development Committee) to log the property, our feeling is there isn't a whole lot left there of much value and can't imagine people will be chomping at the bit to grab this property. Frank said the goal from logging the property was to make it more appealing for a business to come in. Frank asked Barbara about developing a parking area there. He told her that the Department of Interior are willing to help the Conservation Commission by allowing us to use their machinery and manpower to build a parking area for the Pondicherry Trail. Frank asked could we share a driveway with them going into this land? Don mentioned there is a small parking lot there now but the problem is the parking area is too small so people are using the road and using the parking area for the large tractor trailers at the wood chip plant across the street to access the trail. Don asked would you see a problem with us having a shared parking lot? Barbara said she didn't necessarily see a problem with that, suggested that the commission might want to come up with a memorandum of agreement so everyone knows who's maintaining what and how much land is involved. Have something a little more solid, write up some sort of easement access or right of way access to ensure it was a legal document. Barbara said that you can typically work with other groups when it comes to creating parking. Parking is always challenging and takes a bit of finangling or thinking outside the box to get parking. Barbara said if they are willing to help than it's a great idea, definitely get something in writing that everyone agrees with and is comfortable with. Don asked if this becomes designated

as town forest and we've indicated that we (the commission) would be managing it would we be in charge of the town forest? Barbara said yes but always keep the selectboard in the loop. Periodically report back to the Selectman and let them know what's coming in the future. Edith and Frank both questioned could the commission sell or subdivide this land or could it be removed out of being a town forest. Barbara said yes the way to get it out is to go back to the town for a vote. You can do it, not aware of any towns who have done that before though. Barbara said UNH has a good fact sheet on trails, it's a good source of facts on how much money local trails bring in and the Trust for Public Land has a lot of great studies. They require very little in town funds, while commercial properties seem like a good bet but in the long run could be an expense to the town. Don mentioned this property has been sitting vacant for a very long time and has so much wetlands. Frank said one of the lots has been forested but that's the one in the wetlands and he's been in contact w/a local teacher about future plantings. Barbara suggested promoting the wetlands she said it sounds like you can get a lot of community engagement, designate some areas for habitat and focus on the benefits of wetlands and how important it is to have them, if you can protect it in any way you can it certainly is a benefit to the town.

Focus on community engagement, future economic developments and wetlands.

Other correspondence:

The Conservation Commission reviewed a wetland permit application request for more information on subject property: NH Route 116/Jefferson Road, Whitefield, Tax Map #226, Lot #ROW

Frank brought in a tri fold board to work on for the town meeting.

The next meeting will be Wednesday April 10, 2019 at 4:30 p.m.

A motion was made by Valerie Yelton to approve the minutes as is from the February 13, 2019 meeting. Seconded by Donald LaPlante no further discussion, all in favor, motion carries.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Donald LaPlante to adjourn the meeting at 5:48 p.m., seconded by Edith Worcester, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:



Tina Wright



Frank Lombardi