

DEERFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes – September 9, 2013

Members Present: Serita Frey, Kate Hartnett, Dave Linden, Herb McKinney
Members Absent: Erick Berglund, Wes Golomb
Attendees: Dan Kern, Phil Bilodeau, Alex Cote, Charlie Moreno, David Sidmore

Chair, Serita Frey opened the meeting at 7:10 PM and solicited comments from the members of the Forestry Commission since no official business could be conducted until a quorum of the membership was present, pending the arrival of Kate Hartnett.

Forest Management: Alex Cote informed the members that an archery club known as the *Barnstead Backwoods Bowmen* had approached the commission, indicating that they were looking for an area in which to hold their monthly shoots which had previously been conducted from April through September at the T.L. Storer Scout Boy Scout camp. The intent would be to develop a walking course along which targets would be temporarily placed. Mr. Cote asked what mechanism would be used to allow this particular use of town forest land. Serita Frey noted that as with Freese Town Forest, after completion of the easement, the residents could be solicited for their input as to possible recreational uses; however, a warrant article would not be required. Mr. Cote noted that Dowst-Cate currently receives the most public use and that restricting its use by the general public during the club's activities would be undesirable, additionally citing safety concerns. Charlie Moreno felt eastern Dowst-Cate might work while David Sidmore suggested that the 63-acre McNeal Conservation Area located on the town line would allow for entry from Northwood and that archery activity would not be a disturbance to the public. Herb McKinney noted that the easement would dictate the use (if not detrimental to the terms, per Ms. Frey). The organization is welcome to attend a meeting and make a proposal to the DCC.

Charlie Moreno updated those present on the status of the plans for timber harvests on Dowst-Cate and McNeil. Dowst-Cate and Weiss would be continuations of older plans which recommend thinning at 15 year intervals to improve woodland conditions. Mr. Moreno noted the following:

- **Dowst-Cate:** Over 20 years since the last work was performed; recommend creating canopy gaps, address beach and hemlock and opening up for pine
- **Weiss:** Not scheduled at this time; requires permission to access from an abutter
- **Freese:** Lower priority; recommend only limited work

The harvesting is anticipated to take place during October and November if dry, and could be resumed in January if conditions permit. Phil Bilodeau inquired about the bid process and Mr. Moreno explained that, after determining the specifications for the job:

- Mr. Moreno initiates the Request for Proposal (RFP) process, soliciting bids for the work
- Mr. Moreno conducts a walk-through with the bidders who review the proposed harvest area and the plan specifications prior to submitting sealed, dated bids by a specified date
- Bids will be opened at a public meeting and awarded at a later date, allowing for review and discussion by the Forestry Commission and DCC jointly. Opening of the bids can coincide with a regularly scheduled meeting of the BOS in order to expedite the process.

Mr. Moreno offered to go over the forest management plans with Mr. Kern who will review them for Bear-Paw before cutting begins. Mr. Kern noted that the terms of the easements, which are anticipated to be in place prior to the harvest, require certification by Bear-Paw to ensure the plans have been prepared by a New Hampshire licensed forester and are consistent with the terms of the easements. As the Project Manager working as the town's agent, it is Mr. Moreno's responsibility to:

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- *Preparation:* Apply the *silviculture* (the art and science of controlling the establishment, growth, composition, health and quality of forests and woodlands to meet the diverse needs and values of landowners and society on a sustainable basis) by selectively marking the trees to be harvested <http://www.fs.fed.us/forestmanagement/silviculture/index.shtml>. Blazing of the boundaries, normally part of the process, was completed in creating the easements.
- *Administration:* Creating the specifications for the job and soliciting bids
- *Logging:* Manage the cut by monitoring the logging activity to ensure consistency with the plan's specifications

Serita Frey highlighted the compatibility of the forestry and the easement, noting that they could be viewed as components of the same plan. Ms. Frey cautioned Mr. Moreno on the need to consider the existence of scientific equipment at Dowst-Cate, located approximately 100 feet from the entrance, to the right, toward the stream, powered by solar panels in the trees. She explained that this is part of a 5-year, joint project with UNH and Dartmouth to monitor soil temperature and moisture with the goal of seeing how ecosystems change over time in the region. Mr. Moreno indicated that placement of the woods road and the landing location would take into consideration the effect on recreational activities as well as the monitoring equipment. The size of the area needed would depend on the needs of the logging company. The area is tight but the landing could potentially be placed farther in, noting that placement was flexible.

Ms. Frey also expressed an eagerness to observe the response of the stream to the cut, which would be a welcome addition to the study. Mr. Moreno commented that he sees the cut and the environmental studies working together and cited one of the Town of Strafford's forestry objectives of encouraging the propagation of the *Small Whorled Pogonia*. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ot52ArKLz-M> David Sidmore suggested encouraging the growth of existing stands of *Rhododendron* be specified as part of the plan. Kate Hartnett suggested using a one-page addendum to recognize the scientific studies, as well as a means to summarize the results of the cut, the after-harvest condition of the parcel, and to record future plans. Overall updates can span a period of twenty years or be more frequent, if the town desires or as the need arises. Ms. Hartnett also suggested the management plan include strategies for the control of the *Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)* and plans to forward a pdf of information about this invasive to Mr. Moreno, to the members for review and for placement on the DCC website (see <http://nhbugs.org/>). Serita Frey moved to approve the Forestry Commission's plan to move forward on the Dowst-Cate and McNeal timber harvests as outlined in the Revenue Estimate and Project Schedule presented by Mr. Moreno. Herb McKinney provided a second to the motion which passed unanimously.

Relative to the management plan for the *Lindsay Conservation Area*, Mr. Moreno explained that it would be silviculturally managed on a non-systematic, 15-year *reserve cycle*, to which he offered the following explanation of terminology:

- *Full Reserve:* Not touched, i.e. Back Creek wetlands; not even for control of invasives or in response to storms/natural events
- *Modified Reserve:* Not systematic; response to natural events optional

Mr. Bilodeau felt that the reserve designation was inconsistent with the donor intent. Kate Hartnett suggested meeting with Mr. Moreno for further discussion of the management objectives after Mr. Moreno has had an opportunity to complete his research and field work, but prior to the creation of the management plan. Alex Cote noted that based upon Mr. Moreno's net revenue estimate there would be sufficient funds to compensate DCC for its costs and still leave surplus for future activities. Alex

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Cote also informed the DCC that the BOS thru the Forestry Commission had decided to undertake a timber harvest in the area behind the Transfer Station and that a copy of the project would be provided to DCC for informational purposes. Serita Frey moved to accept Mr. Moreno's proposal for the preparation of a management plan for the Lindsay-Flanders Conservation Area. The motion was seconded by Herb McKinney and passed unanimously. It is estimated that an additional \$4000 would likely cover the cost of preparation. Kate Hartnett requested that Mr. Moreno provide a revenue estimate for the work and Erick Berglund will be informed of the proposed expenditure. Ms. Hartnett will also e-mail a copy of the *donor intent* to Mr. Moreno for inclusion in the management plans.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the June and July meetings were approved unanimously. There were no minutes for the month of August. Lacking a quorum, the meeting originally scheduled for August 19th had been cancelled.

Financial Officer's Report: Serita Frey presented the proposed 2014 budget for approval in Erick Berglund's absence. After a brief discussion, Ms. Frey's motion to approve the proposed 2014 budget as presented was followed with a second by Dave Linden and unanimous approval. As a housekeeping measure, Ms. Frey moved to give Erick Berglund the authority to approve for payment, any Upton and Hatfield invoices for DCC legal services, which are presented for payment between scheduled meetings, without prior approval of the members, and in an amount not to exceed \$1500. Formal approval of the invoice(s) by vote of the members is to be given at the next regularly scheduled meeting. This motion was needed to resolve a timing issue frequently resulting in late payment of Upton and Hatfield invoices.

Projects #29A & 29B: Serita Frey summarized information provided by Erick Berglund regarding the quotes received for limited summary appraisals. Due to the fact that the first two bids received were excessively high, a motion to reject both bids was unanimously approved. The results of a second request for quotes resulted in an acceptable bid from Heath Appraisal which Serita Frey moved to accept. Dave Linden provided a second to the motion which passed unanimously.

Town Forest Protection Project: In further discussion of the conservation easement deed, Kate Hartnett asked for clarification of the term *stewardship* as it relates to the *management plan* and whether it was limited to the *forest* management plan or if it was intended to include *property management* i.e. recreational activities, trails and roads. The current forest management plans prepared by Mr. Moreno do not address other activities. Ms. Hartnett noted that *stewardship* as defined in Section 5 of the deed addresses the responsibility of ensuring that the specifications listed in the reserved rights and use limitations are being honored as a part of annual monitoring, whereas the term *stewardship* in Section 1 refers to property. Ms. Hartnett suggested the possible re-naming of Section 5. Ms. Frey questioned whether this would broaden the definition beyond what was appropriate and requested that Ms. Hartnett draft language that would more clearly define *property stewardship* and *forestry management*. At Ms. Hartnett's request, *A Guide for Logging Aesthetics* would be replaced with *Good Forestry in the Granite State* on Page 3 Section 2 C IV as the reference of choice in carrying out forestry *in areas used by, or visible to, the general public.*

Serita Frey adjourned the meeting at 9:25 PM.

The Next Meeting is Scheduled for Monday, October 21ST

The draft minutes were prepared and submitted by Judy Marshall. Final revisions to these minutes will be contained in the minutes of the following meeting, after approval by the Deerfield Conservation Commission