

**Minutes of the Meredith Conservation Commission Public Informational Meeting,
Page Pond and Forest Conservation Timber Harvest, June 18th, 2009**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman MacFarlane at 7:03 PM.

Members attending: Don MacFarlane, Ralph Pisapia, Peter Miller, Robert LeCount.

Alternate members attending: Mark Billings, Robert Davis. Both were appointed full voting members for the duration of the meeting.

Guest: Shaun Lagueux, Licensed Forester

Public attendees: Dona Murray, 46 Roxbury Rd; June and Harold Noreen, 101 Blueberry Hill Rd; Martha Billings, 102 Veasey Shore Rd; Francesca van Ooyen, 36A Blueberry Hill Rd; William J. King, 36 Blueberry Hill Rd; John McEwan; David Duff, 100 Blueberry Hill Rd.

Item of Business: Page Pond and Forest Conservation Timber Harvest

MacFarlane explained why the town will conduct a timber harvest on the property this year. As the deadline for the purchase of Page Pond and Forest (PP&F) approached, an additional \$54,000 had to be raised toward the purchase price. The Trust for Public Land loaned this money to the town with the understanding the town would repay the loan by the end of the year with cash obtained from a timber harvest. During the Q & A portion of the meeting, MacFarlane further explained that this timber harvest was recommended by the PP&F Forest Management Plan prepared by Lagueux and endorsed by the commission.

MacFarlane informed the public that the Board of Selectmen had delegated oversight of the timber harvest to the Conservation Commission on January 8, 2009.

Lagueux did a power point presentation on the timber harvest. He began with a quick synopsis of the Forest Management Plan. He then referenced the forest identification area map (attached). The areas to be harvested this year are A, C, and D. A and C will be accessed from Quarry Rd, and D will be accessed from the range road off Blueberry Hill Rd. D will be the first to be cut.

Lagueux then discussed the five aspects of the timber sale: Planning, preparation, marketing, administration, and close out. Copy of the power point will be attached to these minutes if/when available.

Eleven bids were received from loggers, which Lagueux said was a "good response". The spreadsheet of these bids is attached. The six highest bids were within a few thousand dollars of each other. Matthew Jamison of New Hampton was high bidder at \$77,950. This exceeded Lagueux's "conservative estimate" by approximately \$10,000.

Lagueux spoke positively about Jamison's prior work for him, and he recommended that the town award Jamison the contract.

Some other points made by Lagueux: The timber harvest will comply with the PP&F Stewardship Plan riparian buffer zones and NH Fish and Game crown closure recommendations. Areas A and C will involve removal of whole trees. This is not practicable in area D because of the large pines and the absence of pre-existing wide skidder paths. Jamison, at his expense, will upgrade the range road off Blueberry Hill with truckloads of gravel fill. Jamison will seed the skidder paths and staging areas with conservation mix at close of operation if town supplies the seed.

After the power point, MacFarlane opened the meeting to questions from the public. Numerous questions were asked and responded to by Lagueux and members of the commission. These questions ranged from why the trees had forester's markings (asked by the one child in attendance) to whether equestrian recreation would be allowed on the property.

Lagueux was asked how many trees would be harvested. He stated that approximately 500 white pines would be felled and 100 red oaks. This is the equivalent of one tree per PP&F property acre. The volume of white pine to be removed is approximately 20 – 25% of the total board feet of white pine on the property. The volume of red oak to be removed is less than 10% of the board feet of that species on the property. Lagueux stated that this is not a favorable time to harvest red oak due to suppressed market value.

Lagueux was asked about property boundary buffers. He explained that trees can be harvested right up to property lines but that he generally prefers not to cut within 25 feet of boundaries to prevent trees from falling on neighboring land and because the law requires that slash be pulled 25 feet back from boundaries. He noted there was only one boundary the timber cut would come close to, the northern boundary of area A. He also mentioned the buffers that would be left along recreational trails.

Public questions and comments were civil throughout, and attendees seemed satisfied with the information provided them.

Following Q & A, per motion of Billings, seconded by Davis, the Conservation Commission voted to accept Matthew Jamison's bid to do the conservation timber harvest on Page Pond and Forest by a vote of 6 – 0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Miller, Secretary