

Minutes of the Meredith Conservation Commission Meeting September 17th, 2009

The meeting was called to order by Chairman MacFarlane at 7:08 PM.

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

Alternate members attending: Jacquie Colburn, Mark Tuckerman

MacFarlane appointed alternate members Colburn and Tuckerman to serve as acting members throughout the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of September 3rd were approved by unanimous vote.

On-site Projects – Hamlin Recreation and Conservation Area

Hamlin abutter Lou Kahn has volunteered to clear some of the blowdowns from the red-blazed trails. Commission will review status of trail afterward and decide whether additional trail clearing is needed.

On motion of Billings, seconded by Miller and approved unanimously, the Commission's Sept 26th trail work day will address the following Hamlin infrastructure needs. Kiosk – weather-proof shingles and remove over-hanging branches. Bridges – clean decking in preparation for weather-proofing. Signs – weather-proof edges. Bridge # 5 – replace rotten and missing hand-rail supports and inspect condition of main support timbers.

On-site Projects – 186 Acre Forest

On October 10th, the AMC trail crew will be on-site to assist with rock work on some of the eroded trails.

Rotarian Bob LeCount noted that the bridges, which Meredith Rotary has volunteered to build, are still pending.

On-site Projects - Page Pond Timber Harvest

Forester Shaun Lagueux updated the Commission on the status of the timber cut by written communication today. The Blueberry Hill section of the cut is nearing completion. Two factors have caused the value of the logs to be somewhat below

expectation. (A) A number of logs possessed red rot, resulting in price deduction at the mill. Lagueux noted "This is not unusual in old stands." (B) The log purchaser estimated the value of the first two loads of logs too conservatively. Lagueux intervened at that point, and he reports we have been getting fair value since then. He also reports, "I have been pleased with the work of the operators and the result of the operation, as well as the efficiency of the job to date."

The town has received \$42,964.81 from the timber harvest thus far.

As a post-script to the Sept 3rd discussion of the Blueberry Hill Range Road, the Commission was informed by MacFarlane that berms will not be installed until the timber harvest on Page Pond abutter John Sherman's property is completed later this fall. If the berms were installed now, the hauling of logs from that operation would flatten them. The logger doing the Sherman cut will install the berms.

On-site Projects – Signs

Bill Becker of Ian Graphics in Northfield was pleased to receive the contract for the Leighton Wildlife Area sign, estimated cost \$725. He expects the sign to be done in a few weeks. Commission will pick up sign to save delivery cost. Commission will approach Public Works regarding sign posts and installation. Exact location for sign is yet to be determined.

Miller met with Warren Clark regarding the Smyth Easement signs. Clark has volunteered to make the sign to be mounted at the Hamlin parking lot, per specifications agreed to by Lou Kahn. He also will make the three trail signs the easement connector trail will require, these signs to be identical in format to existing signs in the Hamlin and Eames conservation areas. Clark will be reimbursed for cost of materials. He is donating his time.

Clark expressed interest in making signs for the Commission on an ongoing basis. He is particularly interested in making signs of a synthetic material that will not warp or crack. Miller showed the Commission an example of such a sign.

2010 Annual Activity Report

The Commission began brain-storming next year's projects. Page Pond recreation infrastructure needs were highlighted. These include possible relocation of the Quarry Road gate, a pedestrian bridge, a kiosk, etc. Billings noted there was grant money we could apply for. Miller noted that the surplus money from the timber harvest could pay for some of the infrastructure, enabling those funds to be re-invested in the property.

Proposed Budget Items

Prioritizing of needs and estimation of budget will be on the October/November agendas.

Pisapia noted that a substantial portion of this year's budget has not been expended to date. One reason for this is that jobs which were expected to be hired out to contractors are being done by volunteers, as testified in these minutes. Though this results in over-estimation of budget, it does save the town money. Unexpended money eventually reverts to the town's General Fund.

Natural Resource Inventory Phase II

Discussion was postponed until the second meeting in October. The Commission may seek a consultant to assist with putting this document on-line.

Town Forest Ordinance

No update.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Miller, Secretary