

HINESBURG CONSERVATION COMMISSION

*Rob Farley, Dave Hirth, Charles Kogge, Melissa Levy, Bill Marks,
Nancy Plunkett, Matthew Probasco, Kristen Sharpless, Gerry Livingston (Chair)*

MINUTES of November 10, 2008

Opening

The regular meeting of the Conservation Commission was called to order at 7:20 pm on November 10, 2008 at Bill Mark's house on Hinesburg-Charlotte Road by Gerry Livingston.

Present: Rob Farley, Charles Kogge, Melissa Levy, Gerry Livingston, Bill Marks, Nancy Plunkett, Matthew Probasco

Absent: Dave Hirth, Kristen Sharpless

Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of October 27th were approved.

Gerry's Resignation

Gerry is submitting his resignation as Chair and member of the HCC due to personal issues, effective 12/31/2008. He will complete the Water Quality section of the Greenspace Plan and pull things together before he resigns. He asked that someone from the HCC attend a Select Board meeting with him on December 8. HCC members expressed their regrets on hearing of his resignation.

HCC Intern

Gerry suggested that to improve our productivity, the HCC initiate an internship program to work with a student from UVM, St. Michael's or Middlebury College to assist in planning, GIS, and outreach activities.

Consultant

Gerry suggested Brandy Saxton (www.PlaceSense.com) as a potential contractor to assist us in completing the Greenspace Plan. She could help flush out content and, pending available funds, and assist in making the plan a presentable document. At this point we are looking to two audiences (Planning Commission and public) and two presentation formats (succinct hard copy and digital format).

Geprags Park

Melissa proposed that the primary goals for a park management plan be education, recreation, and wildlife habitat as outlined in the original deed. She will work to draw up a plan based on what she has prepared, our discussion from the last HCC meeting, and examples drawn from other community parks. It was proposed that the plan focus on both near (five year) and long-term visions. Melissa is working to complete a draft of the Geprags Park Management Plan soon.

Melissa noted a new sign is needed at the park entrance and will pursue replacing it on the current fiscal year's budget. Possible budget needs for the follow-on fiscal year were also discussed.

Some late season maintenance on Ted's Sledding Hill and around the "old apple orchard" were completed this past week. The HCC extends its sincere thanks to Bill Piper and Ernie Murray for their continued efforts over the years to maintain Geprags Park.

Budget

Gerry opened discussion on a proposed FY2009-2010 budget, noting he would like to reduce our budget from last year by 10% if possible. Proposed planning, education and park maintenance costs were proposed but need to be coordinated with Alex (Planning & Zoning) before proceeding. Gerry agreed to prepare a formal proposed budget for discussion at the next HCC meeting.

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Greenspace Plan

Sections 1 and 2 of the draft Greenspace Plan were discussed in some detail, noting which chapters were complete or needed additional attention before they could be passed on to a consultant. Responsibility to edit or prepare various chapters were assigned as follows: Melissa - global warming; Nancy - "Conserved or Protected Natural Landscapes and Resources;" Rob and Matthew – "Ground Water;" Gerry – "Surface Waters;" Bill - "Agriculture;" Dave (in absentia) - "Ecological Resources."

It was agreed that the various sections/chapters of the plan need to be submitted and compiled before the end of November so that the draft plan can be submitted to a potential contractor for review. Ideally, we would like an agreement in place and a scheduled revision due by the end of February 2009.

In discussion on the "Ecological Resources" section, Bill suggested more focus on wildlife management and diversity was needed to provide the DRB a reference to aid their decision making.

It was noted that the plan is a dynamic document and would evolve and improve over the years. One of the key goals of the document is to define data needs. It was suggested an intern might be able to assist in researching studies we are not yet aware of.

Respectfully submitted by: Charles Kogge
