



MONTAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

ONE AVENUE A · TURNERS FALLS, MA 01376 ·
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Meeting Minutes

Thursday April 12, 2012

6:30 PM

Town Hall Upstairs Conference Room

Commissioners Present: Mark Fairbrother—Chair, Sean Werle, Donna Francis, Addie Holland
Justin Fermann and Deb Picking

Staff Present: Walter Ramsey

Meeting called to order by Mark Fairbrother at 6:34 PM

1. **Approval of February 9, 2012 minutes.**

Motion was made by Justin Fermann to accept the February 9, 2012 minutes.
Seconded by, Addie Holland. Motion passed 6-0.

2. **Approval of March 8, 2012 minutes.**

Motion was made by Sean Werle to accept the March 8, 2012 minutes.
Seconded by, Addie Holland. Deb Picking abstained from vote. Motion passed 5-0.

3. **Discussion:** Consideration of potential conservation land to be included in the Scenic Byways Program. 25.5 acres of land at the corner of Federal Street and Ripley Road owned by the trustees of Joyce Cote (Map 49 Lot 16). Request made by Michael Dickson 459 Federal Street.

Guest: Michael Dickson (459 Federal Street).

Michael Dickson, a resident of 10 years described the 25 acre parcel in Montague Center: It has a wetlands/stream system, is a coyote corridor, a habitat for foxes, bald eagles and blue herons. The property has been used for highland cattle, horses, and has been actively hayed for the past 10 years. The parcel currently is zoned Rural Business which requires 200 feet of frontage for a single family home. This property does not have town water or sewer services. It is located in a zone II aquifer. Even though the property is zoned rural business, the build-out is more likely to be one or two family houses rather than a business. The soil contents of the property don't qualify for Agriculture Preservation Restriction.

In 2008 the previous owner, Mr. Cote died. Then in 2011 his wife, Joyce died and the property passed to their children. In January, Mr. Dickson was offered 1st right of refusal of the land. Asking price was \$200,000 Mr. Dickson could not secure funding and is now working with the Franklin County Land Trust and the town to preserve it.

Elaine Peteroy from the Franklin Land Trust (FLT) indicates that the Scenic byways program may be an appropriate route. Elaine will work with Walter to facilitate that process. The FLT has worked with Northfield and Ashfield on protecting land through the Scenic Byways

program. In this scenario, FLT would be land owner the Town would own the restrictions. The commission wanted to know what responsibilities of maintenance, monitoring, and liability exist as holders of a conservation restriction.

The commission, through the agent, will remain in coordination with Elaine Peteroy and Mr. Dickson about the Scenic Byways Program.

4. **Agent Update**

- a. Walter announced that Town Meeting appropriated \$10,000 to the Conservation Fund
- b. The Department of Agriculture has approved the Ewell APR (Map 48 Lots 140 and 144) 15.6 acres.
- c. Beaubien- upcoming RDA for work along the Sawmill River Map 42 Lot 19
- d. Annual Town Meeting will vote on a Right to Farm by-law on May 5

5. **Other Business:**

Mark F. asked Walter R. to look into maintenance dredging of the Sawmill River under the South Street Bridge. This was permitted previously and needs to be done again.

At the request of the commission, Walter R. spoke with James Smith (420 Turners Falls Road – Map 39 Lot 109) about a possible wetlands violation for brush cutting in a wetlands area. Mr. Smith indicated he was cutting debris from last winter's storms. He indicated that he will cease cutting in the resources area. The commission will monitor for cutting every six months in the spring and fall – as visible from public property.

Motion made by Addie Holland to adjourn at 8:02 PM. Seconded by Mark Fairbrother

Approved by: _____ Date: _____