

Pownal Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes, 27 April, 2021

Meeting officially commenced 7:10 pm

Present:

Matt Welch, Kathy Elders, Dick Hogue, Angela King-Horne, Janet Lynch

Matt moved to **approve old minutes** - all approved

New/ Continuing Business:

ITEM 1. Map 8, Lot 9: at end of Lawrence Rd. on N. Yarmouth line.

Background:

This lot has always been considered town property. Now the town has been approached to agree to sell it, despite clear policies against that practice.

Jon Morris got a call from one Mr. Story of Story Construction one to two months previously. Mr. Story says he wants it for pasture, but he is also a builder. According to Dick Hogue, Map 9, Lots 51 & 52 on Leighton (town properties) apparently got mixed up with Map 8, Lot 9. So on the same day as this meeting (27 April, 2021) Dick Hogue met with Dwight Edgerly to discuss the ownership of the property.

It remains up in the air as to how this would move forward and who would pay legal fees to determine ownership Edgerly claims he's been paying taxes on this all along. Janet said that it should be a relatively simple matter to check tax records, but Dick said often properties change hands and are difficult to keep track of. However, the most recent Pownal Tax Commitment Book does not support Mr. Edgerly's claim to ownership of the property.

Matt noted that the issue with **Map 8 Lot 9** has been on the Conservation Commission's radar since at least 2018:

- Edgerly was supposedly having it surveyed back in 2018
- Old minutes of the CC also mentioned Map 8, Lot 9, e.g.:
- January 2018: Abutter (Edgerly) claimed ownership of Map 8, Lot 9 and was having it surveyed.
- Nov. 2017: "No further information on Map 8, Lot 9"
- Matt: this issue is always on the CC's old business

Discussion: Members of the Conservation Commission walked Map 8, Lot 9 three to four years ago (Matt, Rosemary and Richard Story). John Mann researches all this stuff before he even gets out physically to survey.

Matt also wanted to make a law to prohibit the sale of town-owned land, and referenced Conservation Commission minutes from November 2018. (Item C., *Minutes*):

Janet Lynch borrowed the relevant page from Angela to scan and send to all, quoted below:

“C. TOWN-OWNED LAND PROPOSAL. MATT ASKED WHETHER WE COULD PLACE AN ARTICLE ON THE TOWN MEETING WARRANT TO SAVE AND NOT SELL TOWN OWNED LAND. SHERRY NOTED THAT IN 1972 VOTERS AT THE MARCH TOWN MEETING VOTED TO HAVE ALL TAXED ACQUIRED PROPERTY UP TO 1972 BE SAVED FOR RECREATION OR FORESTRY USE. THAT IS STILL ON THE BOOKS. SHERRY WILL ASK MELISSA ABOUT HAVING A NEW ARTICLE. ANGELA AGREED TO CONTACT OTHER ORGANIZATIONS LIKE ROYAL RIVER CONSERVATION TRUST AND ASK HOW THEY CREATE USAGE OF LAND FOR PUBLIC USE.”

ITEM 2. Elmwood Road Wood Lot, Map 9, Lot 41

Recent harvest was a success.

Earth Day Cleanup of the wood lot is scheduled for Saturday, 1 May 8-11 am

Matt talked to Dick Clark the road commissioner and thanked him for his work on the area.

Clean up day plan:

- Walk down main trail and tidy up, take down tree stand which is there w/o permission. Dick said he will remove it and then deliver it to the Warden Service, as it is there without permission. To confirm this, Dick asked the Select Board, and they have no record of anyone asking permission to have a tree stand on that lot. Also, anyone who puts up a tree stand must clearly mark it with their name, address and telephone number, which was not done in this case. The Warden Service must keep the tree stand for a year in case anybody claims it. If no one claims it in a year, it becomes unclaimed property.
- Tidy up stone wall at the entrance. We can park right in the lot where all the logs were.
- Dick will remove two big temporary orange signs
- Look for invasive plants, etc.

ITEM 3. Hodsdon Mill site (see also, ITEM 8, below)

No news to report. Dick says selectmen are very busy with other issues.

Angela said she and her husband cleaned up the road frontage along the Hodsdon Rd. Conservation Commission will continue to monitor

ITEM 4. Correspondence:

No correspondence to report.

ITEM 5. Matt's report on the site walk for the proposed NBD solar facility, 234 Fickett Rd.

Matt participated in the **proposed NBD solar project site walk** 6 April. He describes the project as "massive". It is situated on the Old Fickett Rd. Homestead, adjacent CMP corridor lands and the Vosmus place. Matt showed us the map of the planned solar farm on Map 3, lot 76. This project would involve clearing a large area of woods. Matt pointed out that this clearing of trees would also have a carbon impact. The project will cover a large area. It is estimated to generate 5 megawatts.

Members discussed the impacts and implications of the proposal, including the negative carbon impacts posed by clearing woodlands for the proposed solar project. There are both positives and negatives to consider. The project is now basically up to the Planning Board.

ITEM 6.: Proposed CMP substation, and a proposal for a 180 Day Moratorium on Electrical Transmission Corridors

Janet brought up the **proposed CMP substation** and the rationale behind a push to urge the Select Board to require a 180 day moratorium on the permitting for that to assess multiple impacts (road, safety, noise, schools, environmental, abutters, etc.)

Janet distributed printed copies of a message from Bill Schmidt, along with two attachments, "Info for: 180 Day Moratorium on Electrical Transmission Corridors", and a copy of a letter dated 12 April, 2021 to the Pownal Select Board titled, "Pownal Electrical Transmission Corridor Moratorium Ordinance and Letter". Janet also forwarded electronic copies of the message with both attachments to all members of the CC on 26 April.

Janet highlighted the major points of these materials, namely that construction of a new CMP substation would have significant financial, road and road safety, noise and other impacts on the town which the town should have the opportunity to adequately assess before granting any permission. She also pointed out that the CMP corridor project itself is currently in doubt pending an expected referendum to go before the voters in November 2021. Matt pointed out that Thorn Dickinson, CMP

representative, had been less than forthcoming about the proposed project when meeting with members of the CC in 2019. The Select Board has been approached on this issue.

ITEM 7: Woodland Harvest Fund

Dick brought up that there is currently >\$25,000 in the "**Woodland Harvest Fund**" and he has confirmation from the Select Board that that money should be used for surveying.

Discussion:

As there was only around \$50 in the fund previous to the recent Elmwood Rd. Map 9, Lot 41 woodlot harvest, it is safe to assume that that harvest netted nearly \$25,000. Matt asked what happened to the funds from Sweetser/ Allen Rd., Poland Range Rd., Cemetery harvests between 2009-11, pointing out that those funds should be in the account.

No one may spend this money without putting it on the warrant to put it before the voters at town meeting/ vote. The warrant should always specify the source of the funds for any proposed warrant item. Matt noted that Jeremy Stultz (the town forester) would have a record of how much these previous harvests netted and asked, where did the money from these previous harvests go? Dick offered to go through past town warrants from 2009 to find out. There was discussion of what other lots can be cut in the future. It was resolved to ask Jeremy.

Dick says he sees an opportunity for a harvest on Map 8, lot 54 (town owned, but land-locked with no access). He said there is a family which may be selling Map 8, lot 52. Dick is considering approaching the Planning Board to suggest that if there is a subdivision put in, then a road accessing lot 52 would be advisable to facilitate both wood lot and recreational access to town-owned Lot 54. It is currently unknown at what stage of planning Map 8, Lot 52 is in. Matt will check with Matt St. Cyr on the Planning Board to approach them about the goal of having road access to Map 8, Lot 54.

ITEM 8: Trails on Town-Owned Properties

Dick brought up the goal of creating trails put in on some of our town properties. Matt suggested the possibility of connecting Pisgah Hill in New Gloucester to Sweetser Rd./ Allen Road, as that would be the easiest near-term project to achieve the goal of creating a connecting trail. The dirt part of Sweetser would be the easiest place to have a parking lot for this trail.

Hodsdon Mill./ Jordan's Way: Jon made proposal to the Jordan's Way homeowners' association. on Hodsdon Rd. regarding project to secure access to the town-owned old Hodson Mill property, but Jon replied that he has not yet heard back from them on this proposal. Matt said that we need to keep pursuing this issue. Matt added that the members of the Planning Board are being inundated with proposals.

ITEM 9: Meeting Adjourned

Meeting adjourned about 8:40 pm.

Next Conservation Commission Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 25 May, at 7:00 pm.

ITEM 9A: Annual Report for Town Meeting

After the meeting adjourned, as members were leaving, Matt said he didn't bring up whether we should send an annual report to the town in advance of Town Meeting, suggesting that we should continue that correspondence over email.

Respectfully submitted,



Janet Lynch