

**Town of Pownal Conservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday June 27, 2023**  
**7:00 pm, Mallett Hall**

**Call to order:** Matt Welch welcomed all in attendance. Members in attendance include Angela King-Horne, Kate Day, Wellens King, Kathy Elders, Janet Lynch and Matt Welch. Member of the public, Sandra Schuman was present, as well as Matt Altieri from the Planning Board.

Minutes from the May meeting were reviewed and approved by members in attendance.

**Public Comment:** Planning Board Presentation by Matt Altieri

Matt Altieri, Planning Board Chairperson is here to talk about the Planning Board's work over the past year. One of the main goals that the board is trying to achieve includes a tenet of the comprehensive plan :“Preservation of the town's rural character”. Subdivisions in general do not align with this, which is why they have been working with the consulting firm, North Star Planning, for help with making sure that ordinances are written in conjunction with the comprehensive plan. The Conservation subdivision ordinance has been the focus of their work. As currently drafted (but unapproved), the ordinance reads that a subdivision with more than 5 lots must follow the rules of a “Conservation Subdivision”. Each subdivision would be required to conserve a portion of the land (70%) for open space, while also being able to have smaller lot sizes- which, counterintuitively, supports a rural feel. The Planning Board is working to balance preservation of rural character with individual property owners rights to develop their land. There would also be a lengthening of the road allowed within the subdivision. One thing still in question is whether or not to keep the open space open to all or just to the homeowners in the association. Another piece they are wrestling with is whether or not this ordinance will invite more development? The current plan is to hold a December Special Town Meeting to vote on the new Conservation Subdivision Ordinance. Planning Board meetings are the third Wednesday of every month at 6:00- Matt encouraged members of the public to attend.

Angela King-Horne made the comment that Maine law is pretty strong on keeping landowner's property rights intact.

Matt Altieri made the point that without changes to the current ordinance, the town doesn't have the power to push back against development.

Janet Lynch raised the question of safety in regards to lengthening the road. Having a longer road seems that it would be better for public safety and view-shed, but that there might be some pushback from developers on this. Matt clarified that these roads will be private and that every subdivision in town is required to have a homeowners association. Sandra Schuman asked about wells and septic- Matt Altieri responded that testing must be done to show that the parcel can support a shared well. Angela asked about "grandfathered lots" -Matt responded that there are some that are smaller than 2 acres that are allowed to be developed- but not subdivided. Kate Day made the point that many town residents don't know that the Planning Board doesn't have much power under the existing ordinances, and stressed the need to educate town members.

### **Old Business: Conservation Easements**

Discussion was held about terms and conditions that board members would like to have included in the easement.

Kathy Elders raised the question of parking- maybe some spaces should be provided for safety reasons? Matt W. made the point that offering parking might make things tricky. Mountain biking was discussed, safety issues, and education. Matt W. proposed that we allow mountain biking on Elmwood but not Sweetser. Wellens raised a question about getting consultation on determining a trail route for the Sweetser Rd. property. Janet reiterated that no structures should be allowed, and the properties should remain intact with single ownership.

Matt W. will email Adam the list of proposed terms and conditions and ask him to attend our next meeting, he thanked all for attending.

Next meeting is scheduled for July 25, 2023 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Wellens King.