

**Town of Pownal Conservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday May 23, 2023**  
**7:00 pm, Mallett Hall**

The meeting was called to order by Matt Welch at 7:08, the following were in attendance: Matt Welch, Dick Hogue, Kathy Elders, Janet Lynch, Kate Day and Wellens King. Adam Pereira from Royal River Conservation Trust was also in attendance.

Minutes from the April meeting were reviewed and approved by all in attendance.

**Map 8 Lot 9:** Dick Hogue reported on the town committees' responses to the Selectboard's request for an opinion on the future of this town owned parcel. Two were in favor of leasing the property to the abutting neighbor in N. Yarmouth, but the attorney was not in favor of this idea. It has been taken off the warrant for the upcoming town meeting. The property has also been surveyed by communications companies for a repeater. There are several places in town that have poor cell phone service.

**Hodsdon Mill Site:** Nothing new at this time.

**New Business:** Adam Pereira with Royal River Conservation Trust was present to answer some questions about conservation easements. He mentioned that Land for Maine's Future (LMF)- might possibly be able to contribute some funding, but that is not a guarantee. If the town is interested in moving forward with the process, he feels that it is realistic to aim for a town vote at the projected special town meeting in the fall of this year. Adam went on to explain that a conservation easement (CE) - protects land from future development forever, even if ownership of the land changes. It also protects conservation values of land. Adam presented an example of a CE currently being drafted in the town of Yarmouth, he will email this to the members of the CC to study prior to the next meeting. A land trust (in this case RRCT) would be responsible for holding up the terms of the easement- which defines any restrictions associated with the easement, ie: future structures, trail corridors, public access, vegetation management. These specific terms would be agreed upon by the town and RRCT. Sometimes CE's are amended- this is very rare, but possible. If RRCT were to fold- the easement would go to another trust. The town would not be eligible to hold the easement- in general this practice is not advisable. Matt Welch raised questions about continued forest management. Adam stated that RRCT would require a plan for any land management to be in place. Managing wetlands would be included in this plan. Kate Day asked if RRCT is fully staffed to maintain the property? Adam stated that RRCT would take on

some aspects, for example, trail management, but the town would be responsible for continued sustainable forest management as they have in the past. It all depends on the specific language in the document.

**Process of establishing a CE:** 1. Town and RRCT would agree on the general terms. 2. RRCT would then vote to move forward with the project as would the town. 3. RRCT's attorney would draft an easement to be reviewed by the town attorney. 4. Finalize the easement after review, and record with the registry of deeds.

To get the board of RRCT to agree- they would be interested in some important inclusions. At this time, the RRCT is interested in easements on Sweetser and Elmwood woodlots, but probably not the Poland Range lot. Adam explained that the Poland Range Rd. lot is probably too close to Bradbury Mountain for LMF to have any interest in funding. Sweetser is a more valuable lot than Elmwood to RRCT, because of its proximity to Pisgah Hill Preserve. Matt suggested that we strongly consider packaging the two lots. If there are concerns about retaining some property value- Adam suggested the possibility of holding some portions of the lots "easement-free". Perhaps we could exclude 5 or 10 acres- so that in the future those portions of the land could be sold, or used by the town for a "building area" (to put a future public works or fire station?).

**Elmwood-** RRCT would like to manage the trail that goes through the property connecting to Pineland. There is interest in a trail corridor from Elmwood to the power lines, including the existing snowmobile trails. RRCT would advocate for bike use, but maybe no ATV's. Adam suggested keeping the language vague rather than excluding bike use. RRCT would take over trail management for recreation. Could potentially say "close down the trail for November" if it is interfering with hunting. Keep parking open to the town, but take it away from RRCT?

**Sweetser-** Parking- RRCT does not see the need for parking here. Keep the town's right for parking, but prohibit the trust from doing so. Forest management plan, consulting with the trust to give some synergy with Pisgah Hill. Public Access- RRCT would like the ability to manage a trail corridor from Allen Rd. to Pisgah Hill. No immediacy at this time, but would like the possibility to do this in the future. Adam suggested that the town carve out a corridor in one section, but keep the rest "trail-free". Wellens King asked who would determine where the trail corridor lay? Adam stated that the town will have the ability to make delineations for the trail corridor.

Adam will write down more specifics to fo over at the next meeting in June. Homework for the CC members is to start thinking about timing- specifically of when a special town meeting might be held. Look over the example easement to become familiar with the

language in the document. The vote at the special town meeting in the fall would be for the town to give the selectboard the go-ahead to proceed with the easement. Adam added again, that The Land for Maine's Future- may not be interested in funding this easement- no guarantee that the town would receive funding. We need to discuss this with the Selectboard before proceeding. Plan to present to the Selectboard after our June 27 meeting.

We will plan to attend the next Selectboard meeting to keep them updated. Adam will plan to attend our next meeting on June 27 at 7pm.

Matt thanked all in attendance, the meeting was adjourned 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted by Wellens King.