

**Town of Pownal Conservation Commission (CC) Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday March 28, 2023**  
**7:00 pm, Mallett Hall**

The meeting was called to order by Matt Welch at 7:10pm, and the following members were present: Matt Welch, Dick Hogue, Janet Lynch, Angela King-Horne, Kathy Elders, Kate Day and Wellens King. Jon Morris, Town Selectman, was also present.

**Public Comment:**

Jon Morris addressed the group about the proposal regarding the possible sale and/ or easement of the town-owned parcel on Sweetser Road, which was presented to the selectboard back in February. In response to the proposal, the selectboard hired an attorney to look into the validity of an article written in 1972 stating that any property acquired before said year would remain under town ownership and not be available for sale. This ruling should be known in the next two weeks, and will affect whether or not the CC will continue to research the possibility of partnering with land trusts to help preserve town parcels. Mr. Morris also reported that the lot was assessed and valued at \$680,000. Discussion was held regarding concerns that the selectboard has surrounding the sale or easement of town-owned land. The board members want to ensure that the town's comprehensive plan is adhered to, which historically, has not always been the case when partnering with some trusts. Mr. Morris thanked the commission members for having him speak and excused himself from the meeting.

Matt Welch continued the meeting by making the motion to approve the minutes from the Feb. 2023 meeting- all were in favor.

At this time discussion continued surrounding Article 32. Dick Hogue presented the wording as written in the original document. The question was raised of a possible amendment written in 1987, which was drafted to include properties acquired prior to 1972.

Dick Hogue also made mention of the fact that the decision to assess the Sweetser Rd. parcel was not communicated to the CC prior to it happening. Dick reported that it was his understanding that the selectboard should communicate a decision such as this to all relevant town committees.

**Old Business:**

**-Map 8/ Lot 9:** - When town ownership of this parcel is no longer under dispute, Dick suggested that the town might want to consider leasing the land to the North Yarmouth abutting landowner who has expressed interest in purchasing the land.

**-Hodsdon Mill Site:** No news regarding permission to establish a parking area to increase public access to this space.

### **New Business**

**-Public Hearing, April 24:** Original plan to present a rough proposal of the sale/ easement of the Sweetser Road property will most likely change, pending the attorney's determination of Article 32. Discussion was held that the CC members should still plan to present the position held by the commission: that we support the conservation of large town-owned parcels, not only for use by town citizens, but also for habitat preservation, and that it is our duty to determine how this can best be achieved while keeping the town's best interests in mind. The suggestion was made by Janet Lynch to touch on Article 32 and its significance, and how it might bring to light potential vulnerabilities that the town could face in the future.

Angela King-Horne will present on the proposed rail trail system and how it might positively affect the community. She will contact the town clerk to see if the town has submitted its position on the rail trail system to the DOT.

**-Annual Statement:** Matt Welch reported that it is again time to draft/ revise our annual statement. He will find and send out our latest statement and ask for any suggestions and/or revisions from the group.

**-Earth Day:** Matt suggested that we continue our committees' assessment of town-owned land by walking one or more of the properties on April 22. He will take a look at the town maps and send out proposed sites in the coming weeks.

**April Meeting:** April 25, 7pm, Mallett Hall.

Matt thanked all in attendance, the meeting was adjourned at 8:42pm.

Respectfully submitted by Wellens King.