

Town of Pownal Conservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday November 29, 2022
7:00 pm, Mallett Hall

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Matt Welch, the following members were present: Dick Hogue, Janet Lynch, Kathy Elders, Matt Welch, Kate Day and Wellens King.

Approval of minutes from October meeting: The motion was made to approve the minutes submitted by Angela King-Horne, all were in favor.

Discussion was also held regarding the need to better communicate with the town clerk the regular date and time each month that our meeting is held, which currently is the fourth Tuesday at 7pm. Dick stated that he will make sure to submit the agenda to the town clerk one week prior to each meeting. Each month a different member will take on the task of writing and submitting the minutes in a timely fashion to the town clerk.

Public Comment: no members of the public present.

Old Business- Dick reported that he received an email from John Mann regarding the results of the survey of Map 8 Lot 9. They were able trace records back to the original owner, but there was some confusion regarding a change in the name of said owner- resulting in the “loss” of the deed in the system. The final result of the search found that the town does hold the deed to the property. The resident claiming to own the property received it via private sale, but has not been paying property tax to the town since said acquisition. Dick posed the possibility of the town leasing the property to a current N. Yarmouth land abutter as he has inquired about purchasing the landlocked parcel. The question was raised regarding whether or not the town should have the property reassessed before any decisions are made.

Hodson Mill- Nothing new has transpired regarding this parcel.

Royal River Conservation Trust (RRCT) Options for Land Conservation- During the last meeting, members were tasked with reviewing the outline of future conservation options for town-owned land, put forth by RRCT Executive Director, Alan Stearns. The following options were discussed by number: 1) Conservation Easements, 2) Non-profit Acquisition, 3)RRCT Covenants, 4) Protection by Default (Protection by Love).

Discussion was held as follows:

- 1) This option is both complicated and expensive, but has its merits. Dick suggested that it would work well for the Elmwood Road Woodlot (Map 9, Lot 41) and Poland Range Woodlots(Map 2, Lots 27,28,30,32,41). The point was made that Maine Farm Trust will only get involved with a “working farm”- Janet raised the question of whether or not a tree farm would qualify.

- 2) This option was determined by members to also be a viable one. The question was raised whether or not the sale of property would result in a property tax reduction for residents. It was noted that this option might be favorable for the Sweetser Road parcel (Map 4, Lot 20) as it would encourage preservation of land by linking the parcel to the Pisgah Hill Preserve in North Yarmouth.
- 3) Covenants- Not much merit was found with this option. It was noted that Alan mentioned future problems down the road as covenant could easily be undone.
- 4) Protection by Default- This is the option currently employed by the town, and works well now and there is little man-power and cost involved in maintaining the properties as is.

The following suggestions were made: Matt moved that Alan Stearns should be invited to come and further discuss options 1&2 at our January meeting scheduled for 1/24/2023- all were in favor. Janet will send this invite and cc members. Wellens raised the question of whether or not the town consultant working with the Planning Board might be able to help in this process. The point was made that Maine Farm Trust will only get involved with a “working farm”- Janet raised the question of whether or not a tree farm would qualify.

New Business- Dick reported that the town would be cutting a Christmas tree on the Elmwood Rd. lot this week to display in the town center.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.

Respectfully submitted by Wellens King