

Pownal Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

Date: October 25, 2022

1. Members present: Matt Welch, Janet Lynch, Dick Hogue, Kate Elders, Wellens King, Angela King-Horne
2. Minutes from September meeting approved.
3. Public comment: none
4. Old Business:
 - Map 8 Lot 9: no news to report.
 - Hodsdon Mill Site: no news to report.
5. New Business:
 - Both Janet and Dick had conversations with Alan Stearns, E.D. of Royal River Conservation Trust (RRCT) and gave out printed copies of Alan's outline and explanation of four options for conservation of land in Pownal.
 - Janet pointed out that according to Alan, conservation easements are a lot of work for both sides, have significant legal costs, as well as the on-going work of monitoring the use of the easement.
 - Janet reported that Alan said that although conservation easements are possible, since it is a big investment we need to consider what properties are worth it.
 - Another option, making covenants are not as binding and can be overturned; and sale of land to a non-profit land trust is the most protective.
 - Dick said that Alan made it clear that whatever option we pick should be what the town sticks with for all pieces of land.
 - If we are still interested in moving forward with the options laid out, Alan said that he will come to the next meeting to explain further.
 - Janet said that maybe the Pownal Conservation Commission (PCC) should come up with land we are most interested in protecting and see what Alan has to say.
 - Matt suggested that the PCC members go over Alan's options and then come back together to discuss the various town lands before we bring Alan into a PCC meeting.

- Janet said that the size and recreation values of the land are what we need to consider.
- Janet told us that the October 6th meeting focused on farms in Pownal; and that Adam Bishop from the Maine Farmland Trust (MFT) was at the meeting.
- Dick mentioned that the current town information on Bradbury farm is that it will be a homestead not a development, keeping the open acres and the barn, and just reconstructing the house.
- Janet mentioned that MFT does not get involved in buying land if it is not actually farmed; whereas RRCT says it buys land for public benefit, and for the environmental value.
- There will be another meeting to discuss farmlands in Pownal on November 9.
- There are Pownal residents who have gotten involved in the discussion on how to preserve land in Pownal.
- There have also been discussions with solar panel people, but they are mostly interested in pieces of land that are easy to access.
- Matt mentioned the difference in price between the Bradbury farm and the Knights farm; how not that long ago eight Pownal families who wanted to keep the land from getting developed bought the Knight farm for about \$300,000, and after selling it through the Maine Farmland Trust to keep as farmland, only wound up costing each family about \$2,000.

6. Correspondence: none

7. Other:

- Selectman Jon Morris brought up at their meeting that the Snowmobile club is interested in building a bridge on town owned land.
- Angela mentioned the former bridge that went over the river on the Hodsdon Road town land, and that maybe that is what they plan to rebuild, and that the new home owners along the snowmobile trail have allowed the Snowmobile Club to continue to have access to the trail that goes through their property.

8. Adjourn: Next meeting on November 29, 2022