

HINESBURG CONSERVATION COMMISSION

*Rob Farley, Dave Hirth, Charles Kogge, Melissa Levy, Gerry Livingston (Chair),
Bill Marks, Nancy Plunkett, Matthew Probasco, Kristen Sharpless*

MINUTES of April 14, 2008

Opening

The regular meeting of the Conservation Commission was called to order at 7:10 pm on March 24, 2008 in the Town Hall by Gerry Livingston.

Present: *Rob Farley, Dave Hirth, Charles Kogge, Gerry Livingston, Bill Marks, Matthew Probasco, Kristen Sharpless*

Absent: *Melissa Levy, Nancy Plunkett*

Visitor: *Alex Weinhagen*

Bissonette Farm/Town Forest Projects

First subject of discussion was Matt & Kristen's involvement as HCC reps in the Bissonette project.

Greenspace and Cultural Resources Plan

We then went to the main order of business – the ongoing and complicated drafting and presentation of the Green Space Plan. Given the fact that our consultant, Landworks, has so far provided a product and guidance far below expectations, as set forth in our contract with them, we are basically asking: "What do we do now"?

Bill began with his perspective on the 4/7 S/B mtg, wherein Alex, on behalf of the PC, presented its proposed new Village Growth ordinance. The S/B was clearly concerned about precipitously adopting a village ordinance without first dealing with other related issues; one of which, at least some on the S/B felt, should include the simultaneous consideration of a new rural ordinance. This attitude by the newly constituted S/B clearly puts more pressure on the CC to move ahead as quickly as possible toward completion of this project.

Alex said Landworks will present Draft 2 pending our feedback on Draft 1; but that in any event he will have to pay them the balance of the grant money by 5/8.

Gerry also wants GIS data and layouts from them; plus it was agreed we need more specific examples of what other towns are doing in the Recommendations sections.

First impressions from the CC members on Draft 1 include:

Dave – an Executive Summary for the general public is needed; and the full Plan, to be drafted primarily for the benefit of the PC & S/B, should be under 100 pp.

Charlie – also questioned whether its current length & level of detail is desirable.

Bill – agrees w/ Dave, but that we definitely need a thorough scientifically based document to support its anticipated incorporation into the Town Plan and a new ordinance.

Rob – thinks the Plan is not sufficiently tied to resource maps; e.g., what are appropriate buffers? It also needs more specifics why certain practices are better than others.

Kristen – Is not clear from reading the draft of what, why, where and how we conserve – i.e., wants more specificity - more actual implementation documentation, like overlays & proposed zoning language (we all agreed this is a big hole in the current workproduct). It also needs some prioritization of the recommendations it makes; and more consistency in its formatting.

Matthew – believes the Plan should target the PC first and be both specific & technical, and second the public. We should still cut a lot of irrelevant info. Some details could be marginalized to citations to make it more succinct.

Alex – Thought the Intro was too long and had too much flowery language; and that the Plan in general needed more graphs and maps, and a less negative attitude on development in general.

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Kristen raised the issue of vaguely stated goals in the Plan; stating that the Intro needs re-doing and the Plan in general needs a new basis for its organization. A discussion ensued as to what are the Plan's goals; including do we want to try to prioritize resources or is this not realistic in a town-wide plan? Gerry proposed we each re-organize a section in the Plan.

There was discussion on incorporating area-based (or 'conservation') zoning in the Plan after Alex's announcement that he has already been asked by the PC to draft a proposed 'sliding-scale' area-based ordinance. Bill was assigned to work with Alex, on behalf of the CC, in drafting this proposed conservation zoning ordinance.

Rob & Matt will work on the groundwater section of the Plan.

Gerry will do the surface waters section.

Kristen will work on the ag lands.

Charlie will continue working on our website.

Alex will push Landworks once more for more work product and present them with a final list of items requested.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm. The next general meeting will be held at 7:00 pm on April 28, 2008 at the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by: Bill Marks