

HINESBURG CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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

MINUTES of June 9, 2008

Opening

The regular meeting of the Conservation Commission was called to order at 7:11 pm on June 9, 2008 in the Town Hall by Gerry Livingston.

Present: *Rob Farley, Charles Kogge, Gerry Livingston, Bill Marks, Matthew Probasco, Kristen Sharpless, Nancy Plunkett, Melissa Levy*

Absent: *David Hirth*

Rural Area Zoning

Bill reported on conversations with Alex re. his recommendations for changes to rural zoning to the PC and DRB. Alex is recommending tying density to lot size, i.e. smaller lots will be allowed to have a higher density of houses in order to conserve the value of larger lots. Also discussed possibility of incentives to participate in process of conservation planning i.e. more houses if willing to cluster the houses and to work with the DRB on siting. There was discussion of the possibility of removing "environmentally sensitive" areas from the initial calculation of lot size. Bill will take some concerns expressed by the CC back to Alex:

- Rob – subdividing 10 ac. lots in rural areas does not keep with the character of the neighborhood and is not in line with our conservation values. Should the minimum lot size be larger? 20-25 ac?
- Gerry – wants the community to remain involved in having a say over whether new development is in line with the neighborhood.
- Kristen - Middlebury's model of calculating density based on distance from town center, nature of road, and proximity to conserved land is an interesting option that may make a lot of sense from a conservation perspective.

Bissonette Project – June 1 Celebration

Kristen attended. It was well-attended and received. More soon on the Bissonette Town Forest Planning Committee's efforts.

DRB Proposal – J. and G. Bedard

Matthew and Rob attended the June 3 hearing. Reported concerns about the number of houses that would be put in the wildlife travel corridor, the proposal to remove trees along the road, and water availability for the number of houses proposed. All the options for number and siting of houses on the property were unclear.

ACTION: Matthew and Bill will draft a letter from the CC to the DRB formally expressing our concern.

Open Space Plan

1. There is some money left in the CC's and Alex's budget (total \$6-7000) to hire a consultant to work full time on the Plan for 5-6 weeks. The decision must be made soon since the money will not be available after July 1.

Alex suggests Brandy Saxton, a consultant who was considered to take the original contract, and is free to do the work. Ideas for what she would be asked to work on were discussed: (1) edits, (2) focus on specific sections of the plan, (3) identify (and fill in?) holes, (4) facilitate process of

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the CC making decisions about which recommendations to recommend (5) provide more sample documents and ordinances. We did not decide on what to ask her to focus on.

Concerns expressed were that she lives in NY and won't be able to help fill in holes in local knowledge on such a short time frame. We are also concerned that we will have to act fast, but have not made a decision about what to ask for her help with. Rob also expressed the need to work more closely with this contractor to have it be effective – cannot be hands off.

Positive points were that we are concerned that the task is too great to take on by ourselves and a consultant will be able to help, even if a little bit.

ACTIONS: After a vote, we decide to ask Gerry to talk to Alex and Jeanne about moving ahead to talking with Brandy and inviting her to our next meeting. Nancy will compile the sections that we have and send them to her by Sunday morning to read ahead of time.

2. We discussed more concerns over the purpose of the Plan, how it will be used, and the need for the CC to make choices. These discussions continue to be in process.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 pm. The next general meeting will be held at 7:00 pm on June 26 at the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by: Kristen Sharpless