

Town Land Use Committee

Minutes

October 5, 2022

Chairman Fiske called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Present: Tim Fiske, Christine Robidoux, Lilliane Lebel, Allan Pickman, Kathy Boot, Honey Hastings, Gail Cromwell

Absent: Scott Hecker, George Willard

Guests: John and Connie Kieley, Cathy Joly

The April 6 Minutes were approved.

Tim reviewed the recent developments: all the lots on Route 45 have been sold. The small town lot next to the State Highway Dept shed has been sold to the State for \$1. The town property next to the school is slightly more complicated but has two access points: there is a barway on Route 45 which enters the property straight on, and there is an old road beginning at the Reservoir Pumping Station going through the woods to the property. We have a one year permit to use the road which is a Class VI. It is actually the old Route 45 and was given to the town when the new Route 45 was created. The barway entrance is allowed at the moment by a "logging permit" because the state did not want it improved without a known project but the expectation is that permission would be granted when appropriate.

Tim invited John Kieley to describe two easements that are in the works.

First, the town voted in 2021 to place a conservation easement on a portion of Map 7A-35 and 7A-35-1 north of the stone wall bordering the town office building. This area includes the old school house and the town well. After considerable discussion with the Monadnock Conservancy it may be advisable to exclude the school house and its parking lot from the easement, to allow for its continued use and maintenance. This will be discussed further with the Conservation Commission.

Town meeting 2021 also voted to create an easement on the edge of the lot on Map 2B 75-1 for a 50' wide trail. This easement would provide a connection between the Chris Weston Forest and an existing trail easement to the west. The conservancy is considering using a trail easement for this trail, rather than a conservation easement. A trail easement gives the owner (the town) the right to protect the right-of-way from encroachment and by appropriate maintenance. At least three organizations could hold this easement: the Conservancy, the NH Trails Bureau, and the Friends of the Wapack Trail. The only issue is that the town voted a conservation easement not a trail easement and it is not clear whether a new vote should be taken at next town meeting. The Conservation Commission may be able to decide this.

Tim then led a discussion on further preparation for the potential move of the highway garage. Sanford Surveying has returned to do two additional surveys, one of which would analyze the site further back from the Holt Property, and a second site to consider an entrance off General Miller Highway, roughly opposite the Colburn Road intersection.

Going further into the Skladany land from the Holt property could require blasting to create a level site and possible terracing. A potential General Miller site would have to cross wetlands. A building on that site would run east to west, with a south facing roof for solar panels. There are considerable safety issues with a General Miller entrance. Tim is working with the surveying engineers to develop pros and cons for all three potential sites. We need a timeline to show what work might be done when, and the cost of each step. Christine spoke to the importance of getting to a "shovel ready" stage, because that is when grants become possible.

Tim is concerned that costs will keep going up so the sooner we can agree on the project the better. Both Wilton and Peterborough are developing plans for new highway garages. The state has condemned the Wilton garage and that could happen to us. Our building is old and heated by wood. We have barely escaped state notice particularly on the latter. We know that improvements will have to be made to our present building going forward. The chimney is being rebuilt this year as a precaution. Several key pieces of our equipment cannot be stored indoors and there is no room for expansion. Another problem is personnel. We do not seem to be able to hire and keep new workers and our present staff is aging. It is important to have a decent place for people to work.

The Charette happening on October 13-15 will be an important look at our problems by an outside group. One plan not yet developed is the potential use of the present highway garage site as an improvement in the center of town. It is expected that the Charette professionals will come up with ideas on that. We should attend the Charette sessions as individuals and share our views. For example, Lilliane has written up a plan to use the Skladany land for hiking and riding trails.

The next meeting will be on Monday, November 14 at 5 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Cromwell