

**Open Lands Committee  
Public Meeting Minutes of January 5, 2006  
Council Chambers, Dover City Hall, 5:30 p.m.**

In attendance: Marcia Colbath, Anne Kotlus, Cheryl Niles, Ann Reid, Dona Layton, John Scruton, David Price, Steve Bird, Tom Fargo, Joyce El Kouarti, Anna Boudreau.

Also in attendance: were Kevin McEneaney, President of Strafford Rivers Conservancy, and Kitty Spitzer, expert on labyrinths.

1. Approval of minutes: Motion by Anne Kotlus to approve minutes of December 2005 with amendments. Seconded by Ann Reid. Motion passed, with Anna Boudreau, Ann Reid and John Scruton abstaining.
2. Treasurer's Report: Steve Bird reported that as of November 30 the balance of the Conservation Fund was \$485, 795.00. There is presently \$132,000.00 in accounts receivable. There were expenditures for land conservation totaling \$585,000.00 in November, 2005.

Anne Kotlus asked at what point the \$1 million bond for 2007 will become available. Steve explained that the bond will become effective July 2006. The City Finance Director must authorize the bond before it can be utilized.

John asked when Edith Holley will receive money for the city's purchase of the development rights for Jenness Farm. Anna explained that the process is taking somewhat longer than expected because the City of Rochester is unfamiliar with the conservation process and still needs to survey the property. Anna suggested that under the circumstances it would be prudent to sign a P&S agreement.

2. DOT Mitigation: Tom provided additional background and updated information on the initiative by the Department of Transportation to acquire conservation land in Dover to mitigate the Newington/Dover bridge project. In Dover there are five to six acres of disruption, therefore, DOT needs to conserve ten times this amount, or 50-70-acres, of land. The Dover City Council is encouraging the DOT to consider the Tuttle Farm as the highest priority project in Dover for mitigation. Initially, the Council supported the Blackwater Brook area for DOT mitigation. Now the DOT is seeking guidance about where to invest approximately \$1.5 million for land conservation to mitigate wetlands impact in Dover. The Dover Planning Dept. is seeking input concerning this from the Open Lands Committee and the Conservation Commission.

The Blackwater Brook area is part of a mosaic of land with high resource and conservation value. DOT has asked the consulting firm they have been working with to compare the resource value of the Tuttle land to that of the Blackwater Brook area. The environmental impact statements will be presented for public comment. Tom stated that he personally believes there are aspects which make the Tuttle Farm a

better property for mitigation. The Tuttle Farm is closer to the impact area and it possesses tidal wetlands. However, there are no sensitive species, as there are in the Blackwater Brook area, though this is not a qualifying criteria for DOT mitigation.

Kevin McEaney was in attendance to ask the OLC to consider recommending that at least a portion of the DOT dollars be applied to the Tuttle Farm project. SRC is looking at a variety of funding sources such as LCHIP and FRPP to piecemeal the portion of the cost of the conservation easement for which SRC is responsible. Kevin pointed out that having a myriad of funding sources would make monitoring the property complicated because of the individual stipulations of each.

In addition, the Tuttle Farm project is already underway, while activities to conserve properties in the Blackwater Brook area are either in the initial stage or have yet to begin. This reality contributes to making the Tuttle Farm project a higher priority for DOT mitigation.

Ann Reid motioned to recommend that all of the \$1.5 million from the DOT be applied to the Tuttle Farm project. Seconded by Joyce. Anna Boudrea abstained, as she is also SRC's Executive Director. Steve Bird abstained, as he is a City of Dover staff member. Motioned passed u/a by remaining OLC who were present.

### 3. Reports by Task Groups

#### **EASEMENT MONITORING**

The team took down the cable that was on the Bagdan / Kirkwood land.

#### **OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

The idea to hold a workshop on the dollars and cents of land conservation in January 2006 was scratched. Team must meet again in the near future to talk about other ideas for workshops.

Marcia and Steve mentioned that the Council would like the various city committees to do presentations at an upcoming Council meeting. Date of this meeting is TBA. Joyce proposed an agenda for the OLC presentation to the Council.

Steve Walker of LCHIP has asked if the Dover OLC would like to host an easement monitoring workshop. Cheryl made a motion for the OLC to host this event. Seconded by Ann Reid. Passed u/a.

#### **GRANT WRITING**

Marcia responded to LCHIP's call for 2006 projects. Our wish list contained a property with which we are still in negotiations with the landowner. We submitted this same property for DES grant consideration. However, we recently learned that DES did not include Dover in its list of cities to be considered for grants in 2006.

Joyce informed the committee that the New Hampshire Legislature is considering using \$9 million of the extra \$30 million that was recently found in the state budget to replenish LCHIP funds. Therefore, it is possible LCHIP may receive an unanticipated infusion of funds.

The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation is offering a \$20,000 grant. We need to check the NHCF website to see if this grant might be used to pay for professional services (easement monitoring, lawyers fees, etc.) and outreach workshops.

### **TRAILS**

Tom stated that the Community Trail Design subcommittee has come up with a consensus on a design. Design proposal will be presented to the public in a meeting to be held on January 17 in City Council Chambers. The subcommittee design plan recommends that the whole trail be paved and that no gates be erected. The subcommittee will contact the Rotary Club about assisting with the trail. A report on the subcommittee's activities has been prepared. The subcommittee has held thirteen meetings since June 2005 and has devoted 400-plus volunteer hours to this project.

Tom said that we are set to put a sign at the entrance to the Measured Progress trail, but must complete discussions with Liberty Mutual before we can post the sign on the Measured Progress land. Currently, the Planning Department is holding conversations with Liberty Mutual about stipulations, restrictions on its portion of the trail.

Dona mentioned the possibility that employees at Measured Progress would take responsibility for the maintenance of the company's portion of the trail.

### **LAND ACTION**

No news.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Kitty Spitzer gave a presentation on labyrinths to the OLC during this meeting. In the future, it might be desirable to establish a labyrinth at Cochecho River Conservation Area, the former Cassily property on Sixth Street.

4. Joyce moved, second by Cheryl, to move into non-public session to discuss confidential land protection projects. Passed u/a.
5. Steve moved, seconded by Joyce, to exit non-public session and to return to the public meeting. Passed u/a.
6. Anne Kotlus moved to accept the non-public minutes, as amended, of December 2005. Second by Cheryl. Passed u/a.
7. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.