

AMHERST CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
January 3, 2007

Meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

Present: John Gerber (Chair), Otto Stein, Dan Kaplan, Liv Baker, Eleanor Manire-Gatti (recording)

Staff present: Dave Ziomek

David Ziomek reported that the town expects a \$3.3 million dollar deficit for FY 08. The Town Manager has asked department heads to make a list of suggested cuts. For the Department of Conservation this would include elimination of funding for seasonal rangers at Puffer's Pond and Amherst Trail crew, for Town Energy work, and for special events. There would be reduction of hours of the Management Assistant, and reduction of funding for maintenance of Hitchcock Center and Conservation Department, for rental equipment for trails and special projects, for printing of signs and advertising for community gardens, for departmental publications and for paying for copies, materials, and supplies for subcommittees. Total reductions for the Department would be \$14,296.

The Conservation Department is working on a five-year update on the active portion of its Master Plan.

Stephanie Ciccarello, wetlands administrator, has returned from personal leave. Her new hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Commission financial support for the preservation of the historic Kimball farmhouse through its CPA funds was discussed. Gay Carpenter, member of the Historic Commission, spoke of the Con Com financially supporting the purchase of land to mitigate the cost of the 1.7 acres being released from APR. Dan Kaplan suggested the CPA money for the Kimball House should come from Historic Preservation not the conservation line. Jonathon Tucker will look into use 5-6 acres of Wentworth Farm for part of the ten acres of farmland needed for mitigation.

Stephen Saxenian spoke for the Conservation Commission's support for Haskin's View to receive CPAC funding.

Saxenian's reasons for requesting CPA funds for Haskins View included:

1. Completion of the Roaring Brook Wildlife corridor
2. Continuation of quality environments for rare and endangered species
3. Protection of wetland resources
4. \$30,000, has raised by abutters and will be used if this land is preserved
5. If this land is preserved, owners of 100 more acres may offered for conservation
6. Since Haskins View area lacks Amherst Town water and sewers, contamination of wells would be costly for Amherst because or the necessity of connecting into Town Water and sewers.

7. The plume from Leverett's covered landfill could pollute Puffers Pond in the future.
8. As of October 1, 2006, 40-50% of this land contained priority species and rare Wildlife

Sonya Scofield, an interested neighbor, presented a request for CPA funds by the South Amherst Conservation Association for preservation of the 6.9 acres of land of the proposed South East Street Development.

Scofield's points of discussion were

1. Preservation of the view
2. Possibility for grazing
3. Viability of APR farmland (the Mad Woman Farm)
4. \$42,000 have been pledged by interested individuals

Nicholas Thaw, an abutter, advised the Conservation Commission that the South Amherst Conservation Association has spoken with Scott Nielson who appeared interested in a purchase agreement. The Kestrel Trust Fund has spoken with Scott Neilson about this. The SAC Assoc. requested between 100,000 to 150,000 in CPAC funds from the conservation line.

The Conservation Commission's FY08 CPA list includes (not necessarily in priority order):

- 575 NE St. \$6,000 - \$16,000/yr
- Lawrence Swamp \$100,000
- N. Amherst \$ 75,000
- Funds for Surveying and appraisals - \$25,000
- Southeast St. \$100,000. - 150,000.
- Haskins View \$100,000 - 150,000.

Dan Kaplan made a motion to adjourn at 9:45 p.m. Seconded by Otto Stein. Passed unanimously.