

CAMDEN CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Minutes of Meeting – July 2, 2014

Members present: Barbara Melchisky, Roger Rittmaster, Robin Kern, Doug Johnson (Chair) and Tom Hopps

Member not present: Carla Ferguson

Others present: Saskia Huising, Pat Finnigan (Town Manager), Landon Fake (Parks and Recreation Director and Snow Bowl General Manager), Dorie Klein briefly and Mitch Kihn (Forester) arrived close to end of meeting.

Doug called meeting to order at 7 p.m.
Minutes of the meeting of May 28 were approved.

Old Business:

Comprehensive Plan review and Vernal Pool update were postponed to next meeting
Barbara said she will give her vernal pool findings to Doug.

Reserve Fund Item – Doug reported being informed by Pat Finnigan that the SelectBoard approved CCC request to donate \$500 from its Reserve Fund to Maine Farmland Trust, leaving \$1896 in the Fund. Pat also wrote that the SelectBoard proposed donating all or a portion of the Fund to the Town’s Street Tree or Project Canopy programs and requested she be informed of the CCC response to this.

Megunticook Watershed Association - A one-year CCC membership (\$150) in this Association was approved.

Nature Walk – Roger reported the next walk will be at the Snow Bowl, July 5, 10-Noon.

Dorie Klein, having to leave the meeting early, asked Landon if tree-cutting is scheduled for the Tacks 22 trail. He responded, “probably not this year because of the redevelopment of other part of the ski area.”

New Business:

Barbara announced she will be leaving CCC at the end of her term in the fall. Thanks for her service were expressed.

Erosion Control at the Snow Bowl – Doug read his memo sent to CCC members June 18 and later to the Town Manager, in which he addressed the erosion control failure June 13 and again June 25-26 that caused silt and sediment to be washed into Hosmer Brook and Hosmer Pond. Doug pointed out that it is the duty of CCC, as described in the Comprehensive Plan, to protect the Goose River watershed as well as the Hosmer Pond watershed. Next, Doug asked Tom to report on his experience around that failure. Tom recalled tagging with Doug in April of this year ‘Significant Trees’ to save on the scheduled redo of the Tacks 22 Trail. Large trees, deep-rooted with broad canopies are

attractive and beneficial in holding mountain soil, said Doug and the Planning Board earlier had approved this tree preservation during the initial trail construction. Specifically, these large-canopied trees slow runoff down the mountain and their massive root systems stabilize soil and deter erosion on the steep hillside above Hosmer Pond. Also the beauty of the great old specimen trees along the recreational trail inspire awe. Because tree preservation was viewed as important for the environment and the overall aesthetic quality of the recreational skate-ski trail, CCC had conducted earlier a Significant Tree Inventory along the proposed 22 Tacks Trail. Sixty four 'Significant Trees' were identified, date recorded and individually tagged. This was included in a report presented to the Planning Board in September 2011.

So with that background, Tom reported being surprised when receiving a phone call early in June from Saskia Huising about the felling of what she called great mother pines on the Spinnaker Trail next to her property. Her expressed anguish caused Tom, he said, to visit the site with her. Stumps, larger than the 18" diameter trees Doug and Tom marked as Significant Trees to be saved in the Tacks 22 area, dotted the hillside. Several days after visiting the site as well as Hosmer Brook with Saskia Huising, the rains came, erosion control measures failed and siltation into Hosmer Pond became the issue.

Note: Before this meeting Landon emailed to CCC information indicating different philosophies around forestry management: favor wide canopy, deep-rooted old trees; remove old trees allowing younger, more desirable trees to develop; leave it wild letting nature take its course; burn, don't burn.

At Doug's request Tom attended the June 23 emergency meeting of the Hosmer Pond Association. At that meeting, Tom reported hearing; "Is it safe to swim in the pond?," "Is my pump safe from damage taking water from the pond?," "Will this cause algae bloom?". Damage to the pond was basic but questions concerning the efficacy of the management of the project arose. John Scholz, Hosmer Pond resident and member of the Planning Board, admitted mistakes had been made in the thorough lead up to the project. Lee Schneller, Hosmer Pond resident, said she alerted the DEP to the failure after the second storm, June 25.

Following the meeting, driven by thinking the project needed firm daily expert directing and oversight, Tom reported he had drafted on his own, not representing CCC, a letter-to-the-editor type statement. He read the statement asserting that the Town Manager and the Director of Parks and Recreation should not be burdened, beyond their regular duties, with the daily supervision of a six-million ski area redevelopment project and to hire an overall development director.

Landon countered that he was aware of this extra responsibility when hired last fall and wanted the job. Pat defended her position as point-person in overall project management. Tom volunteered to withdraw his proposal.

Doug shared his experience as an arboricultural consultant to preserve and protect trees during the renovation of the Camden Amphitheater. His role was to check daily the work

of the landscape contractors to be sure they were following specifications designed to preserve existing trees. One day during his daily monitoring things went awry and a stop order was issued. The infraction was noted and other methods implemented to assure specifications were adhered to. Doug went on to say that deviation from specifications was similar to what happened at the Snow Bowl when loggers with giant equipment destroyed erosion control features in what Landon Fake had described as a one-day deviation from specifications. This was due to a hasty effort to drag felled logs and trees down the mountain.

Mich Kihn reported he did not inspect erosion control features on site the day loggers destroyed erosion control measures in their hauling trees down the mountain in the rush before the impending rain storm of June 13, 2014.

Robin asked what other agencies besides DEP have any jurisdiction over this project. There was mention of the Army Corps of Engineers. Pat pledged to keep CCC informed of project developments.

The next meeting will be July 30.
Meeting adjourned at 8:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Hopps, Secretary