

# **Town of Randolph**

## Conservation Commission

Minutes of January 10, 2019

**Members Present:** James Hunt, Walter Graff, Roberta Arbree, Nate Peters

**Members Excused:** Bruce Kirmmse, Gary Newfield, Lauren Bradley (Selectmen's Rep)

**Others Present:** John Scarinza, Auvern Kenison, and Judy Kenison

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

**Call to Order:** The public hearing was called to order at 7:00 by James Hunt.

John Scarinza presented the proposal to the Board to purchase 200 +/- acres from Gorham to add to the Randolph Town Forest. Auvern Kenison shared concerns that too much land was being added to the Randolph Town Forest and they did not need to add more. Scarinza advised that Gorham is working with the Conservation Fund to purchase 2,000 acres adjacent to their town forest that was formerly Yankee land and is now owned by the Conservation Fund.

Copies of the map were distributed to those present showing the parcel that Gorham is proposing to purchase, which is the Tinker Brook parcel, along with land that they are proposing to sell to Randolph. Gorham's purchase of the Tinker Brook parcel will protect their watershed. Gorham has received grants from the state and from LCHP, along with a few smaller grants to help with the purchase, but they need to come up with money for their portion. Gorham is proposing to sell the 200 +/- acres that is not in their watershed to Randolph to raise the money for their share of the purchase. The land Gorham purchases will be placed under conservation restrictions, which will prevent any development and will protect the watershed permanently. It will remain a working forest and will be open to public access for hunting, fishing, and non-motorized activities. Auvern Kenison asked about taxes for the parcel and advised since it is a watershed, it is taxed differently. Scarinza advised that the tax amount Randolph receives for the land should not change, as the Town Forest will continue to make a payment in lieu of taxes on the land to the town. Scarinza also advised that the access for the Randolph Town Forest is through the land that they are proposing to purchase. Auvern Kenison stated that they currently have a right-of-way over that land. However, the purchase will allow them to own the access, rather than having a right-of-way. The parcel is currently managed as commercial timberland and has been harvested a couple times the last 20 years. There is hardwood, along with a good component of softwood, which is something they don't have a lot of in the Randolph town forest. Haven Neal, the Gorham Town Forester, along with Randolph's Town Forester have agreed on the quality of the stand. The Randolph Opportunity Fund, which is managed by the NH Charitable Foundation, has agreed to pay for the purchase, so there will

be no cost to the taxpayers. Scarinza advised that if Randolph does not purchase the land, Gorham may put it on the market, which means it could be purchased for development. Auvern Kenison asked if the purchase would have to go before the town at the meeting for a vote and was advised it would not, as the money is private, so all that is required is a public hearing. The Conservation Commission and Board of Selectmen will vote.

**On a motion by James Hunt, seconded by Roberta Arbree, the Board voted unanimously to close the Public Hearing at 7:45 pm.**

#### **REGULAR MEETING**

**On a motion by Walter Graff, seconded by Roberta Arbree the Board voted unanimously to approve the proposed purchase of 200 +/- acres, delineated on the map from the Conservation Fund dated June 15, 2018, from the Town of Gorham by the Town of Randolph to be added to the Randolph Community Forest.**

A Board member asked what happens after the meeting tonight and Scarinza advised that he will bring the information to the Selectmen, and if approved by the Selectmen, Gorham will bring it to their town meeting for a vote. If approved by Gorham, the whole process will most likely take 6-9 months to complete. Adding the land to the Town Forest will have to go before the town as a warrant article at next year's meeting.

John Scarinza advised that there have been changes in the state law about taxation of watershed property due to a disagreement between Manchester and Auburn over taxation.

Walter Graff questioned the monitoring of conservation restrictions on the land and will check with The Conservation Fund on this. John Scarinza stated that more projects are using restrictions.

Nate Peters asked about parking at the end of Jimtown Road and was advised there is currently a cul-de-sac where people park. There are proposed trails for glade skiing in that area, and a parking area may have to be considered at some point.

**Minutes of July 12, 2018: On a motion by Roberta Arbree, seconded by Nate Peters, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the minutes of July 12, 2018.**

The Commission discussed the Budget. Roberta Arbree advised that all of the line items were underspent this year. The Commission decided to leave the General Expense line at \$250, as this covers dues to the NH Association of Conservation Commissions. The line for minute taker was increased to \$400, in case more meetings are needed this year. Meetings and trainings was left at \$1,000, and Other Conservation was reduced to \$100. Inventories and Studies was left at zero, as there is nothing planned this year. This leaves a total budget amount of \$1,750.00. Roberta Arbree will send the proposed budget to Chairman Kirmmse, for him to submit to the town. John Scarinza advised that there is a stipulation that what is left over in the

budget goes into the Conservation Fund, along with half of the tax from a change in land use from current use.

James Hunt asked about the note to be sent to the Meiklejohn family thanking them for the donation. Roberta Arbree will check with Chairman Kirmmse to be sure this was done.

John Scarinza advised that the Planning Board is in the process of updating the Master Plan and will be reviewing land use and zoning ordinances. They would like to have input from the Conservation Commission on buffers for water bodies and streams, mainly the Moose River and Israel River.

John Scarinza advised that the money from the Randolph Opportunity Fund will require a vote for the purchase of the land from Gorham. There are three voting members, which are the Planning Board Chairman, the Conservation Commission Chairman, and the president of the Randolph Foundation.

**Adjournment: On a motion from Roberta Arbree, seconded by James Hunt, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Shelli Fortin

January 11, 2019