

**BELMONT CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

January 9, 2001

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

Attendance: Commissioners: L. Allen, K. Baskin, M. Flamang, R. Foster, M. King, M. Weil; Consultant to Conservation Commission: Joanna Smith; Community Development Liaison: G. Clancy; League of Women Voters: M. Velie; Field Study Committee: Kathy Ruane and Lee Barber of the Recreation Commission and George Tahan of Belmont Hill School; McLean Open Space Alliance: Martha Moore

Meeting Minutes: Meeting minutes of November 14, 2000 were approved. Meeting minutes of December 5, 2000 were approved with minor modifications.

Announcements: The Judy Record Memorial Concert is to be held on January 21, 2001 at 3:30 p.m. at the Payson Park Church.

McLean Hospital – Fire Road Restoration: R. Foster spoke to Gary Sanford of Sanford Ecological Services. McLean's intends to replace trees as requested by Belmont Conservation Commission. Plantings will be coordinated with the Conservation Commission in consultation with the Shade Tree Committee and other town agencies.

McLean Hospital – Open Space Management Plan: The BSC Group and the Cecil Group issued the Plan, a survey of open space, vegetation, habitats, and species found on McLean property, on December 14, 2000. Both Lloyd Allen, as chairman of the Conservation Commission, and Ruth Foster, as member of the McLean Land Management Committee, received copies of the Plan.

First Armenian Church, Concord Avenue: The engineer representing the church (from Norse Engineering) could not meet with the Commission but has stated someone will be able to attend February's meeting. The Commission will be investigating enforcement and remediation alternatives.

Field Study Committee of the Recreation Commission: The Field Study Committee, represented by Lee Barber and Kathy Ruane, would like to consider conversion of five (of 72) acres of Rock Meadow to fields and parking. The Field Study Committee is charged with identifying and evaluating land areas for use as fields and preparing a report for submittal to the selectmen.

Belmont children are starting sports at an earlier age and more sports are being offered by the high school. As a result, fields are crowded. The committee does not feel that the

incinerator site is an option because of use conflicts. The Town Counsel has researched the parcel's deed and determined that active recreation such as football and baseball could be allowed.

George Tahan of the Belmont Hill School described an arrangement that is being considered between the town and the school to fund construction and maintenance of the fields and parking lots. Belmont Hill School has proposed to pay for field construction in exchange for exclusive use of the fields on school days between 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Because the school has limited field space, middle school students use the school's current field in the early afternoon and attend classes in the morning and late afternoon. Use of another field would allow the middle school to consolidate its academic schedule.

Concerns of the Commission included the location of the fields relative to the remainder of the parcel; loss of bluebird habitat; long-term management of the fields, including trash removal; the size of the proposed parking lot; loss of trees; the location and extent of wetlands; the need to balance active and passive recreation; and the conversion of public parkland to private use. The Commission approved in principle the concept of active recreation at Rock Meadow subject to further evaluation. The Commission also discussed the need for legal advice on specific issues such the proposed fields at Rock Meadow and development of Arthur D. Little. A meeting with Mel Kleckner, Town Administrator, will be requested to discuss this.

McLean Hospital – Development: Martha Moore of the McLean Open Space Alliance asked the Conservation Commission to consider how, as a commenting commission, it will address the McLean development project's public hearings. A general hearing, on plans for all three areas, is scheduled for January 30, 2001. The Commission has not received copies of the most recent additions to the plan.

Consultant: Joanna Smith of 71 Leicester Road was introduced to the Commission by R. Foster. She is a retired attorney who has volunteered to be a consultant to the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Baskin

approved 4/3/01