

## **MINUTES Belmont Conservation Commission Meeting**

Minutes of March 2, 2010 at Room 2 Town Hall at 7:00 P.M.

**Attendance:** Chair: Miriam Weil, Vice-Chair: Martha Moore; Members: Margaret Velie; Nancy Davis; Jim Roth; Tino Lichauco; Associates: Jeffrey North. Agent: Mary Trudeau.

Public: Stanley Dzierzeski – Coalition Belmont Uplands

### **Review Minutes of February 2, 2010:**

Tino Lichauco moved that the Commission approve the minutes, as amended, of the February 2 meeting of the Belmont Conservation Commission. Jim Roth seconded, and the vote was unanimous (6).

### **Rock Meadow Sheep Project Discussion Update**

Mary Trudeau and Miriam Weil met with Roger Wruble and Liz Shaw at Rock Meadow to discuss meadow management and the potential usage of goats and sheep for maintenance. They discussed Roger's bird inventory and his opinion that no harm will be done to the area [to the right of / northeast of the path from the parking lot] as a result of sheep keeping. Roger is interested in sheep and goats at Habitat. There have been meetings about a pilot project there and this seems to have some advantages over using Rock Meadow for the pilot program. Mary Trudeau spoke with Glenn Clancy concerning the need for a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals and noted that it may be possible to obtain an informal approval allowing for a 3 month pilot program prior to filing for a formal approval. This would allow the evaluation of the value and issues associated with the project.

### **Joan Teebagy Bee Project**

Ms Teebagy reviewed last year's plans for beehives at Rock Meadow with the Commission and it was noted that although hives had been approved, the activity never commenced. Ms. Teebagy indicated on a map where she is hoping to have bee hives in 2010, noting that the hives would be close to the sentinel tree in the east meadow, just north of the Mill Street parking lot. Ms Teebagy noted that the hives should be out of the way of roads or paths, yet they need some proximity to roads so that beekeepers to carry materials to the hives. Ms. Teebagy is proposing 2 hives this year, and would hope to expand to two additional hives in the future. Ms Teebagy noted that she also has hives at Sergi farm and some in Lincoln. She noted that she would establish the hives in April. Tino Lichauco asked about the expected number of bees and their range. Ms. Teebagy answered that she would expect 30-50,000 bees and their range is about 2 miles. A good yield could be 20 lbs of honey per hive. She noted that there are benefit to

gardeners, and the meadow through the increased pollination. There are no perceived disadvantages of keeping bees at Rock Meadow, although Ms. Teebagy is concerned with possible vandalism.

Nancy Davis suggested that a \$25 donation (next year, in 2011, assuming success with the bee class of 2010) for those such as beekeepers who benefit from specialized use of Rock Meadow.

Ms. Teebagy is also available to conduct education sessions, talks at the gardens, etc.

Nancy Davis made a motion for a letter stating Ms. Teebagy has the permission / agreement of the Commission to place two hives at the discussed location near the sentinel tree, to make a presentation to the gardeners, and to come back next year to report on the bee project to the Commission. Tino Lichauco amended the motion to note that the letter contain a description of the advantages, threats to bees, and how bee population may be helped with this project. Tino Lichauco seconded the motion, the vote was unanimous (6).

### **Additional garden plots at Rock Meadow proposal**

Mary Trudeau noted that the potential for approximately 15 new gardens exists at Rock Meadow. The Commission discussed concerns with the soil in the locus of the new gardens and requested that Mary Trudeau arrange for a full soil test with micro-nutrients, through the agricultural extension service at University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

The Commission discussed the condition of the gardens. Tino Lichauco noted the charm in the randomness. Economic disparity of requiring specific fencing was discussed and he noted that it would look odd to have the chaos of the existing fencing next to regulation fencing. Nancy Davis noted that the front gardens will need good fencing and that they should not be built of debris or garbage.

### **LWCF Grant Application: Nancy Davis**

Nancy Davis explained that the LWCF grant could be a good opportunity to upgrade Claypit Pond Park, which is in serious need of improvements to the stone dust track, particularly to the south and east sides of the pond where the path has deteriorated. Mud, grass, invasive plants, bittersweet, and poison ivy exist in this area. The areas around the flag pole and the memorial is also deteriorated.

Jim Roth asked that we identify the key stakeholders, such as the owner of the land, and indicated that the Commission cannot seek a grant if there is conflict of interest. Nancy Davis discussed forming a coalition, such as a "Friends of Claypit Pond."

Miriam Weil will seek out people at the School and Recreation departments, and possibly the Council on Aging / Senior Center. The Commission will discuss the formation of a subcommittee at the April monthly meeting.

In a related discussion, Martha Moore indicated she would attend a workshop on March 3 to gain understanding of EOE requirements for obtaining federal grant funds for projects like creating a parking area on Mill Street for McLean trails. Local architect Joe Hibbard has designed a parking lot, and an RFP has been written for its construction.

### **CPA Meeting Discussion:**

The Commission discussed the potential uses for Community Preservation Act grants in Belmont, noting that municipal projects such as the rehabilitation of the Town Pool or purchase of conservation lands could be funded.

Martha Moore noted that the Commission should explore a conservation restriction for Rock Meadow to see if it is desirable to add additional protection to Conservation land.

Miriam Weil thought that the CPA grants could be useful for redeveloping the transfer station, recreation opportunities, establishing a dog park, repairs to the Town hockey rink, although she noted that recreational facilities must be outdoors to qualify for CPA funding.

### **Uplands (DEP 106-0072) update**

The Commission noted that they had not received a final decision from the adjudicatory process. Stanley Dzeirzeski of the Coalition for the Belmont Uplands spoke to the Commission about the possibility of working with the Commission on any subsequent appeals that might be taken. The Commission did not decide to take any action at this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm