

Belmont Conservation Commission Meeting  
Tuesday March 27, 2007  
Homer Municipal Building Room #13  
7:00 PM

Attendance:

Acting Chair David Webster, Commissioners: Carolyn Bishop, Martha Moore, Nancy Davis, Peg Velie  
Associates: David Cowell, Tino Lichauco, Monica King  
Agent: Mary Trudeau

Public:

Thomas Reed of 62 Woodfall Road  
Norman Kherlop for 70 Woodfall Road  
Tom Chalmers, Weston Conservation Commission

Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes of March 6, 2007 and made several minor changes to the text. Carolyn Bishop moved to approve the minutes as amended, the motion was seconded by Peg Velie, and was unanimously approved by the Commission.

The Rock Meadow Subcommittee members (King, Webster, Davis and Bishop) reviewed the minutes of the Rock Meadow subcommittee meeting of March 6, 2007 and made several minor changes to the text. Caroline Bishop moved to approve the minutes as amended, the motion was seconded by Peg Velie, and was unanimously approved by the members of the subcommittee.

Tom Chalmers of the Weston Conservation Commission:

Tom Chalmers attended the meeting to discuss the experience of the Weston Conservation Commission's use of sheep to maintain meadow conditions within public and private lands. The Weston Conservation Commission, in conjunction with Brian Donahue, of Lands Sake purchased 30 lambs for use in meadow management. The lambs were used to manage approximately 5 acres of meadowland. The program was designed to feed the lambs on grass, slaughter in the fall when grass died back, and use proceeds of meat sales to fund program. The project encountered various problems, including: predation by coyotes; parasitic worms, scheduling issues with slaughter house and intensive labor requirements. The project included the use of a llama midway through the second season, but found that this was not a perfect solution to the predation issue. Mr. Chalmers noted that moving the sheep between paddocks every couple of days was often time consuming and always unpredictable. Paddocks were movable solar, fiber fencing.

Mr. Chalmers stated that there was no economic advantage to the use of sheep, but that aesthetic and educational values were prized by residents of the town as well as the program coordinators. He clearly felt that the sheep were an available option for meadow management, but that it should only be undertaken if the program goals included a desire to work with animals and create an organic management program. He noted that the use of sheep was economically dismal and labor intensive.

Victory Gardens

Ms. Trudeau reported on a meeting she had with Bruce Westgate of the Victory Gardens program. Mr. Westgate and Gino Volpe have been managing the Victory Gardens for many years. Ms. Trudeau relayed the procedures for operating the gardens that have been employed by Mr. Westgate and noted that some of the accounting should be done by the Town. She stated

that Mr. Westgate had been collecting rental fees for the garden plots, and had a private bank account established to hold these monies. She noted that there would be an article on the April Warrant this year to create a revolving municipal account to hold these fees. The account would allow the Commission to hold the fees in reserve for payment of water bills, maintenance of the irrigation system, as well as use in the maintenance of the meadow. She stated that there did not appear to be any inconsistencies in Mr. Westgate's accounting, but that it was irregular for municipal receipts to be held in private bank accounts. She recommended that the Conservation Commission control the accounting for the gardens and become more involved in the assignment of the garden plots. She also recommended that the Commission raise the gardening fee to \$25.00 to cover the costs of water and maintenance of the gardens. The Commission agreed that this fee was reasonable and should be applied.

Mr. Webster requested that Ms Trudeau develop a list of tasks that would be required for the Commission to run the Victory Garden program. The scope of the list would include all of the tasks now done by Mr. Westgate and Mr. Volpe.

Monica King agreed to contact Mr. Westgate and invite him to speak to the Commission at the May 1, 2007 meeting of the Commission.

#### 70 Woodfall Road: continued Public Hearing for Notice of Intent

Norman Kherlop represented the applicant at the continued Public Hearing. Ms Trudeau began the discussion by noting that a revised soils analyses chart had been submitted by PES and that contaminant levels were actually lower than in the original report. She noted that the apparent decrease was the result of incorrect labeling of the units of measure, rather than any additional testing or information. She also noted that the only contaminant requiring remediation was the lead found in the soil.

The Commission discussed the draft Order of Conditions for the project. Ms Trudeau had prepared a suggested Findings and list of potential conditions. The Commission modified both texts.

Thomas Reed, an abutter to the project, voiced concern with the use of vegetation to separate the lawn from the wetlands. After discussion, and in consideration of this concern, the Commission wrote the condition to create a transitional zone through the use of plantings, rather than a distinct line of shrubs at the limit of work line on the site.

Nancy Davis moved that the Commission authorize Ms Trudeau to incorporate the changes discussed by the Commission and to finalize the Order of Conditions and the findings for the project. The motion was seconded by Peg Velie and unanimously approved by the Commission.

Martha Moore moved that the Commission close the public hearing for the 70 Woodfall Road property. Nancy Davis seconded the motion, and the Commission unanimously approved the motion.

#### Agents Report

Mary Trudeau went through recent correspondence with the Commission and distributed various brochures and conference literature to the members. She noted that the Waltham Conservation Commission had requested representation from the Belmont Conservation Commission on the advisory board for the development of an RFP for a golf course on the Metropolitan State Hospital site. She stated that she had attended the first meeting on March 21, 2007 as the representative of the Commission. She noted that she hoped that a member of the Commission would consider representing the Commission at later meetings. The Commission discussed

suggestions for the RFP, including maintenance funds for the course, inclusion of a water budget, an Integrated Pest Management Plan and the potential for inclusion of cross-country skiing on the future golf course. David Cowell noted that he has some professional expertise and might be available to assist in the RFP process.

The Commission discussed the upcoming Town Meeting. Ms. Trudeau stated that Debbie Hartman might be unable to make the presentation to Town Meeting concerning the WHIP program accounting and seed money request. David Webster agreed to work with Debbie to provide coverage for the presentation. David Cowell and Nancy Davis agreed to be available to assist.

Ms Trudeau noted that the Open Space Survey had been finalized and Peg Velie stated that she had seen it on the Town of Belmont web site.

Martha Moore asked that the Commission try and arrange a public meeting to discuss the subcommittees draft wetlands bylaw. The Commission agreed to keep the night of April 30, 2007 available, in case the May 1, 2007 agenda becomes too full to accommodate the discussion.

The Commission asked that a copy of the finalized draft be given to each member prior to the meeting to allow for review. Nancy Davis agreed to send a copy of the draft bylaw to all members.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 PM Next meetings April 30. 2007 at 7:00 PM and May 1, 2007  
Submitted by: M. Trudeau