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Town of Vernon

Open Space Task Force



Minutes of Monthly Meeting April 12, 2010

Meeting Location: Vernon Police Station Community Room West Rd

Meeting was called to order at 8:00 P.M.

Present: Ann Letendre, Russ Kunz, Tom Ouelette, Ginny Gingras;

The OSTF received with regret the resignation of George Arthur, and recognized his many contributions to the Open Space Plan, particularly his mapping skills and knowledge of Vernon's landscape.

1.0 Approval of Minutes

Minutes of March 8, 2010, draft were approved; motion by Ouellette, second by Gingras.

2.0 Old Business

2.1 Priority Parcel Preservation:

Talcott Property – Talcottville Gorge – Ann reported that Amy Paterson contacted Don Quinn, attorney for Talcotts to discuss possibility of transferring rights to the Gorge parcel only, which is about 26 acres. Talcotts are interested in pursuing that parcel. Next step is to obtain appraisals. She also said that Talcotts want to be involved in the appraisal process. Ann will contact John Ward to see if the Town will pay for the appraisal. It is too late to make the May grant round, so it will have to wait until the next grant round

Farmland Preservation – Strong Farm No new activity

Petrin property – No report

Tankerhoosen LLC Parcel Update – No new information, although Tom Ouelette reported that John Ward had mentioned at the last Town Council meeting that there was still ongoing action on the equestrian center plans. This fact conflicts with information received by Amy Paterson who has been in discussion with Tom Mason, manager of Tankerhoosen LLC regarding preservation of all four parcels through a Forest Legacy grant, a federal program.

Gunther Property – Gingras reported that the TAC may pursue the property if it is feasible to sell the frontage for commercial lands, leaving the rear parcels to add to TAC property.

2.0 Old Business

2.1 Priority Parcel Preservation: (cont)

Additional Open Space Parcel Evaluation – Ann reported that she asked Aaron Nash to show the lower section of 60 Frontage Road, essentially the wetlands area, as open space on the Open Space Plan map for the POCD. Aaron asked Ann to contact Heidi and Len to inform them, which she did. Heidi asked about the process of adding parcels to the

Open Space Plan. Ann noted that there is no established process, other than obtaining PZC approval to purchase, and the POCD update should define one.

Ann also reported that George has checked into the four small parcels on the Tankerhoosen River that the OSTF had noted were not on the OS Plan. The four parcels are residences, so would not make sense to pursue for open space, although conservation easements along the River would be appropriate. Contact with property owners needs to be made to advise them of how to care for riparian areas along the River.

Note – Confluence of the Tankerhoosen and Hockanum Rivers to be considered for inclusion in the OS Plan. Resources in the area will need to be researched first. RBV data is taken on the Tankerhoosen side of the confluence each year.

2.2 Open Space & Farmland Preservation Funding - Update

2.2.1 Local Funding – no change

2.2.2 State Funding – no new information

2.3 Conservation Commission Activities –

2.3.1 Variable-leaved Milfoil in Valley Falls Pond – Tom reported that the Town Council approved funds to address the milfoil. Tom said the CC would be preparing an aquatic invasive management plan, which would include the long range alternative consideration of suction removal if the milfoil returns. The CC is looking to get volunteers for a day walk program to look for any signs of fanwort in the Tankerhoosen. The volunteers would need training to do this. George Knoecklein offered to do the training.

2.3.2 POCD Inputs – The CC prepared a set of revised goals for the POCD.

2.3.3 Other – Discuss Tankerhoosen Greenway east of Tunnel Road – Ann reported that a walk was arranged with permission from Ed Clark to walk his property along the Tankerhoosen. Jane Seymour, wildlife biologist, attended. Vernal pool egg masses were noted in some small wetlands pockets, as well as marsh marigold plants. The water flow in the Tankerhoosen was swift, so it was not conducive to looking for any further populations of eastern pearlshell mussels. While not a priority, Ann suggested that at some point an environmental assessment of the area might be a worthwhile consideration for the CC. The OSTF discussed the interdependence of the pearlshell mussel and trout populations.

2.4 Update on 2009 Goals

2.4.1 OSTF Membership – We are down to four members. There have been no appointments forthcoming.

2.4.1.1 Resolution of OSTF status w/ Town, fill vacancies – Letendre noted that the OSTF was down to four regular members. This dire situation needs to be resolved. Ann feels part of the lack of action on the part of Administration is the confusion of the OSTF authority – that is, whether or not it is a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission. Ann will try to get time with Administration to address it.

- 2.4.2 **Public Education – Town Council presentation, local access presentation, publication of booklet, articles for Horizon, RR – Ann will call Joe Grabinski to do a piece for his cable program.**
- 2.4.3 **Support of Plan of Conservation & Development - no new action.**
- 2.4.4 **Sponsorship – hikes, other? No change at this time**

3.0 New Business

3.1 – Discussion – Clark Farm – see above

4.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM, motion by Gingras, second by Ouelette.

Respectfully submitted, Ann Letendre, Co-chairperson