

**FOSTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
March 19, 2008**

DRAFT

*****NOTE: Meeting Was Conducted in Two Sessions*****

SESSION ONE

Foster Town House, Howard Hill Road, Foster, RI 7:00 p.m.

A. Call to Order

Lucy Minturn, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

B. Roll Call

- **Members Present:** Lucy Minturn, Chair; Scott Ulricksen, Vice Chair; Sisan Smallman, Secretary; Chris Iozzi; Kathryn Zuromski.
- **Excused:** Mike Wood.

C. Approval of Minutes

- **Minutes of February 18, 2008.**

MOTION: Scott made a motion to adopt the minutes of the February 18, 2008 meeting; motion seconded by Chris. Vote called. Sisan Smallman abstained; all other members in favor; none opposed. **Motion passed.**

D. Reports

- **Budget** – Report from Lucy.
 - Lucy reported that she will ensure that registration fees for the 4 members who attended the Land & Water Resource Summit are paid.

ACTION: Lucy will follow through with getting payment to the Summit.

- Ian Suttcliffe, Eagle Scout candidate, has been given \$200 in Commission funds to coordinate the bluebird and bat house project for Earth Day. He will procure and cut the wood, and will bring refreshments.
- Lucy proposed that the Commission run 2 ads in the Foster Home Journal, 1 for the bluebird and bat house project and 1 for Earth Day activities. Lucy also proposed a flier to be sent out to Foster residents advising of the trash clean-up.

MOTION: Sisan made a motion to approve funds for the 2 ads as discussed; motion seconded by Scott. Vote called; all members in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. **Motion passed unanimously.**

MOTION: Sisan made a motion to approve funding and distribution of informational fliers about Earth Day clean-up; motion seconded by Scott. Vote called; all members in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. **Motion passed unanimously.**

ACTION: Lucy will update the wording of ads and forward them to the FHJ tomorrow, to make the deadline for the April edition. Lucy will prepare and distribute fliers.

- **By-Laws and Mission** – Report from Sisan.
 - Draft By-Laws were distributed at the last meeting. Kathryn noted that it should be clarified that committee meetings and workshops are subject to the same Open Meetings Law requirements as Commission meetings.
 - There was discussion of reviewing duties and authorities of the Conservation Commission as delineated in the Comprehensive Plan, Town Charter, State law, and other documents. Subsequently, it may be helpful to discuss respective roles with the Planning Board, Land Trust, Preservation Society, and possibly others. Lucy noted that functions common to Commissions are advisory recommendations and education/advocacy.

ACTION: Sisan and Lucy will announce a workshop soon for the purpose of clarifying the mission of the Commission and preparing for a collaborative meeting.

- **Environmental Inventory** – Report from Kathryn.
 - Kathryn reported on the first meeting of the committee, with guest speaker Chris Modisette (RC&D) discussing the Scituate Conservation Commission's experience with creating an environmental inventory.
 - Kathryn has begun to gather existing information available for Foster, including a document of evaluation criteria produced by former Commission members. Planning has digital parcel information and updated GIS maps of Foster, and there is also an existing data base of parcels of 20+ acres. Overlay maps should be possible to develop (and some may already exist).

ACTION: Kathryn will continue gathering information and resources in preparation for conducting a survey of residents to collect information on important environmental issues and features, and in preparation for the environmental inventory.

- **Planning Board Liaison** – Report from Kathryn.
 - She was unable to attend the last workshop on Route 6 development, but plans to attend the next, on Saturday. She is now being provided with advance packets of site plans and other documents for the meetings. Lucy asked that she bring current plans to Commission meetings for review. Kathryn reported that the concerns being expressed at the Planning Board include the impact of 2-acre zoning on watershed and wetlands.
- **Land Trust Liaison** – Report from Lucy.
 - The haying contract award on Trust parcels is likely to be made soon.
 - An appraisal on a potential acquisition property was unexpectedly low, which could impact the owner's willingness to sell.

- **DPW Liaison** – Report from Scott.
 - An engineering report is expected soon regarding the North Road project and how to resolve the erosion issues, particularly around the stream crossing. Any decision to pave should wait until the report has been fully evaluated.

ACTION: Lucy will make inquiries to check on the status of the project.

E. Old Business

- **Earth Day Clean-up and Activities/ Update on Bluebird and Bat Houses.**
 - Since April 22 falls on a Tuesday, Earth Day activities are being scheduled for the following Saturday, April 26, 2008.
 - As noted, the bluebird and bat house project is being coordinated by Ian Suttcliffe as part of his Eagle Scout project. This will take place at the Woody Lowden Center from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

ACTION: Lucy will follow through on scheduling use of Woody Lowden.

- Roadside trash pick-up is planned from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with distribution of gloves and bags at the DPW.

ACTION: Lucy will ensure the DPW is aware of the project, and she will develop a map showing areas in particular need of attention. Scott will ask the Girl Scout Leader if the Scouts are able to assist. Chris is requesting donations of bags and gloves from area businesses.

- Information will be provided regarding the environmental inventory, and a preliminary survey flier and possibly poster will be developed.

ACTION: Kathryn will develop poster and flier.

- Members reviewed a draft article on Earth Day and the Conservation Commission for the Foster Home Journal.

MOTION: Chris made a motion to have the article submitted to the Foster Home Journal; motion seconded by Scott. Vote called; all members in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. **Motion passed unanimously.**

ACTION: Sisan will submit the article to the FHJ tomorrow, to make the deadline for the April edition.

- **RI Tree Council and NRICD Requests.**
 - Lucy proposed that these requests be tabled for final decision at the next meeting.

MOTION: Sisan made a motion to table these requests until the next meeting; motion seconded by Scott. Vote called; all members in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. **Motion passed unanimously.**

- **Land & Water Resource Summit.**

- Four members attended the Summit on Saturday, March 15, 2008, and participated in various workshops. All brought back valuable information and ideas for integration into ongoing work of the Commission.

F. Correspondence

- **Distributed: RIDEM Notice; Rinker Materials Flier; RI Tree Council Newsletter; NRICD 2008 Flier; Earth Day Shirts Flier.**

- Lucy requested that members routinely review all correspondence as available, and bring up any concerns or questions at the following meeting. No issues were raised relative to current correspondence, and no action was required.

G. New Business

- **Web Presence.** There was discussion that this issue should be held until there is someone available to oversee the Town website.

MOTION: Sisan made a motion to table indefinitely work on a web page for the Commission; motion seconded by Chris. Vote called; all members in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. **Motion passed unanimously.**

H. Future Agenda Items

- In addition to ongoing items from this meeting, membership on the Technical Review Committee will be a future discussion item.

I. Adjournment

Lucy advised members that the second session of the meeting would be held jointly with the Planning Board to hear a presentation by Rich Blodgett of the Providence Water Supply Board.

MOTION: Sisan made a motion to adjourn this session of the meeting, to be reconvened with the Planning Board; motion seconded by Scott. Vote called; all members in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

SESSION TWO

Ben Eddy Building, Foster, RI 8:30 p.m.

A. Call to Order

Lucy Minturn, Conservation Commission Chair, called this session of the meeting to order jointly with the Planning Board at 9:25 p.m. after the Planning Board concluded scheduled hearings.

B. Roll Call

- **Commission Members Present:** Lucy Minturn, Chair; Scott Ulricksen, Vice Chair; Sisan Smallman, Secretary; Chris Iozzi; Kathryn Zuromski.
- **Planning Board Members Present:** Julia Parmentier, Chair; Marcia Bowden; Helen Hardy, Secretary; Marcia Bowden; Tom Mercier; John Neale; Ann-Marie Ignasher, Town Planner.
- **Additional Participant:** Rich Blodgett, Providence Water Supply Board.

C. Presentation

Rich Blodgett presented a preliminary proposal for consideration. Certain Town roads within the reservoir watershed area where the Providence Water Supply Board (PWSB) owns the property on both sides of the road might lend themselves to being closed off to vehicular traffic and becoming "linear parks." If this were to occur, the PWSB would assume all maintenance and security costs and responsibilities for the roads and bridges. Emergency vehicles would have access. Non-vehicular recreational use would be permitted (pedestrians, bicycling, snowshoeing, horses).

Significant concerns were expressed regarding the interests and rights of the property owners whose homes abut the sections of roads under review. Their properties would become cul-de-sacs with only one route in and out. A range of potential enticements for the owners was discussed. It was also noted that road maintenance (which would be at a lesser level than dirt roads for regular vehicular travel and a higher level than fire lanes) would have to be sufficient to enable unencumbered passage of fire apparatus.

Mr. Blodgett stated clearly that the PWSB would not pursue this proposal unless the Town and the affected residents were favorably interested. He indicated he has had some discussion with the property owners, and will continue to discuss the options with them. The Planning Board and Conservation Commission were open to further consideration of the proposal, contingent on the interest of the property owners. Other potential sites were mentioned as well.

D. Adjournment

The Conservation Commission adjourned this session of its meeting with thanks to Rich Blodgett and the Planning Board.

MOTION: Sisan made a motion to adjourn; motion seconded by Chris. Vote called; all members in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sisan Smallman, Secretary