

TOWN OF GORHAM
CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES
MAY 6, 2008

The Town of Gorham Conservation Board met on Tuesday, May 6, 2008 at 7:00 PM at the Gorham Town Hall. Present were, Gene Hermenet, Steve Horrocks, Andrew Hoover, Bob Brancato, John Foust, John Frank, Fred Lightfoote, Bill Johnson, and Nancy Hollenbeck.

The minutes of the April 8, 2008 meeting were approved by a motion from Andrew Hoover, seconded by Bill Johnson. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

a. Status of newsletter. Mr. Brancato stated that the newsletter should be in the mail any day. Mrs. Hollenbeck confirmed that the draft has been reviewed, payment made and printing and mailing is in the works. Extra copies of the newsletter will be available at the Town Hall.

b. Landowner call guide – Mr. Brancato has prepared a draft of the document “Managing Landowner’s Conservation Request” dated 5/5/08 this was briefly discussed. This is to be used for the initial phone call. This document will probably need to be updated as we go. If someone calls any of us they can use this as a guide. The “Call” section is set up step by step to direct the conversation. There is a page of suggested questions to ask the caller. If the caller indicates further interest, then a follow up meeting with two board members could be arranged and further information provided. After this meeting if it is determined that this may be a potential project, the caller will be invited to a board meeting to review the proposal. Mr. Johnson had some suggestions for modifications to this guide. He will work with Mr. Brancato on these possibilities.

c. Packet of information - There is a multitude of information available. Information was received from the Finger Lakes Land Trust and distributed to board members. There are Federal and State incentives, a couple of forms that are used for site review, fact sheet on farm land protection. There were also websites where further information can be found. We will continue to work on this.

d. Definitions – a brief maybe one page version of various terms should be developed to be used during phone calls. Many of the terms have definitions that are too long and cumbersome for initial phone calls. Further information can be provided after an initial phone call if the interest is there.

New Business:

a. Suggested indexing system - Bill Johnson explained a potential indexing system and how it could be used to keep track of various documents, forms, etc. created by this Board.

b. Ideas for a GCB manual. Creating a manual of forms, documents, information sheets, etc. was discussed. This will be a work in progress.

c. General data storage and retrieval system. Mr. Johnson stated that we all have a large amount of information, probably in a pile or notebook. We need a way to

catalog or store it electronically so that we can retrieve it easily when needed. A data base could be used for this purpose. Who would create, update and maintain this is a question. Everyone agreed that this would be a great tool.

Other:

John Foust will meet with Maria to finish the mapping that we had been working on. He will check to see if she needs to meet with us again.

Discussion followed regarding the Open Space Index dated 2006 and the Open Space, Farmland, Conservation Plan dated 2005. The plan is on the website, the index is not. Nancy will check into this.

Board members briefly discussed the topic of other Town officials talking to landowners about conservation tools and options. It is hoped that if a landowner is interested he will be referred to this board for further discussions as appropriate.

Also talked about confidentiality. Often times landowners may not want their initial interest in conservation possibilities made public. All meetings of this board are public and a record of our meetings becomes a public record. Two or three members of this board could meet with a landowner with confidentiality. Information regarding this meeting could be brought back to the full board for discussion, leaving out identifying information. A statement should be prepared stating that all information gathered prior to a formal meeting with the board will be kept confidential. When it comes to a board meeting the information becomes public. This information needs to be relayed to the landowner so that he knows in advance that if he proceeds to the full board, the information becomes public. The difference between this Board and the Finger Lakes Land Trust was briefly discussed. The Land Trust is not a municipal entity and is not required to adhere to the Open Meetings Law. Meetings of all municipal boards is public as is the documents that they create or receive.

The next meeting of this board will be June 3, 2008 at 7:00 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM by a motion by Mr. Hoover.

Nancy Hollenbeck
Secretary