

TOWN OF GORHAM
CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES
JULY 10, 2007

The Town of Gorham Conservation Board met on Tuesday, July 10, 2007, at 7:00 PM at the Gorham Town Hall. Present were, Chairman Steve Horrocks, Robert Brancato, John Foust, Fred Lightfoote, John Frank, Bill Johnson, Gene Hermenet and Nancy Hollenbeck.

The meeting was called to order. The minutes of the June 5th meeting were approved by a motion by Mr. Brancato, seconded by Mr. Hermenet. Mr. Frank abstained from voting because he was not in attendance at the last meeting. Motion carried.

The Board reviewed the plan for the Montebella Estates Subdivision. Mr. Johnson attended a public hearing regarding this subdivision and had concerns regarding access, types of homes, lake access, number of homes, etc.

The Powers and Duties of the Conservation Board as adopted by resolution of the Town Board on June 27, 2007 were handed out and briefly reviewed. The items contained therein are those which the Conservation Board should be looking at when reviewing an application such as Montebella Estates, such as Scenic Resources, Natural Resources, Agricultural Resources, etc.

Boardmembers discussed the possibility of visiting the Montebella Estates site. John Foust will contact Kevin Shultz to see about getting an aerial photo of the property to review. This Board should check to see if this parcel is identified in the Open Space Index and bring to the attention of the Planning Board any items such as identified scenic views, or identified agricultural resources, or items that are a priority for protection. Comments or recommendations to the Planning Board should be made in writing and can be accomplished through the minutes. If this Board needs further information they can request it from the Building Office or whatever entity has the information. If they want to walk the Montebella site, they should contact Gordon Freida to get his input. They should look at this parcel as if there was nothing on it.

Mr. Frank asked if there were GPS coordinates for the parcel. We should be able to walk out there with a hand held and be able to plot specific things. This was briefly discussed. Mapping, GIS and GPS were briefly discussed. These may be tools that can be used by this Board.

They talked about a field trip to the site.

Boardmembers questioned item C of their procedures and the timing of receiving applications and responding. Mrs. Hollenbeck stated that a project of the size of Montebella Estates will take from six to 18 months. This Board will have ample time to prepare comments and/or recommendations. The Powers and Duties are a guideline and were written hoping they would meet the requirements of all boards and staff involved. It is possible that changes will need to be made. The Conservation Board is a new Board and it will take time to work your responsibilities in with all of the other Board's requirements and schedules. It is a work in progress.

Members discussed at length erosion control, drainage, problems from other projects, issues that may come up with regard to the Montebella Estates project. They also discussed and had concerns with the types of homes that may be built. Talked about

the roads, whether the Town would take dedication, maintenance of the roads and drainage, etc. Much of the discussion was more appropriate for the Planning Board and the items that were discussed are the responsibility of the Planning Board and/or Town Board to review and address.

Board members discussed their duties and responsibilities and what they need to do to continue and stay on track. There are steps that need to be taken to become competitive for any grant funding.

Mr. Frank stated that the Town has funds already, which are declining in purchasing power everyday because of the appreciation of land values. If we were to do something before the studies are done and the data collected, would that be a plus to apply for grant money. It would show our interest and our intent.

The items that Maria is pushing us to get done will give us a stronger application for funding.

Purchasing of development rights was briefly discussed. Maybe we should back off on agricultural resources for the time being and choose another resource such as a view shed. Work our way through the process and this could be an example of our good faith and intent, and be worth some points when we submit a formal application for grant funding in the future.

At a previous meeting Maria Rudzinski had suggested that this Board could be looking at zoning throughout the Town and possibly make recommendations for changes that may help to protect agricultural land/farmland. It was stated that it might be appropriate to have Jerry Hoover come and speak to this Board about what the Town of Seneca has done with agricultural land with regard to zoning and lot sizes to protect agricultural land. There was question whether this was the right Board to be reviewing this or having a speaker on this subject. It appears that there are some zoning methods that could be used to protect agricultural land. What Seneca is doing will preserve land unless it is changed down the road. Under the current zoning the total build out in Seneca would be 800 homes. That is all that could be built. Their zoning is very restrictive. It may not be what would be best for the Town of Gorham. Lot sizes were discussed at length.

Board members discussed the possibility of trying to preserve a parcel that is in a view shed, put a conservation easement on it. This was discussed at great length. It was thought that we should just pick a project and run with it so we can learn how it is done. The first step would be to talk to the Town Supervisor to get authorization to proceed. This board is unsure where to begin, but is anxious to get to work. After a lengthy discussion, Mr. Hermenet stated that he will meet with Supervisor Calabrese to discuss this possibility and will report back to this Board.

The next meeting will be August 7, 2007 at 7:00 PM. Maria Rudzinski will be in attendance and we plan to finish up the ag map, etc.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM by a motion by Gene Hermenet, seconded by Bill Johnson.

Nancy Hollenbeck
Secretary