

TOWN OF GORHAM
CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES
AUGUST 4, 2009

The Town of Gorham Conservation Board met on Tuesday, August 4, 2009 at 7:00 PM at the Gorham Town Hall. Present were, Andrew Hoover, Bob Brancato, John Foust, John Frank, Bill Johnson, Gene Hermenet, Steve Horrocks, Fred Lightfoote, Bob Corby and Nancy Hollenbeck.

Bob Corby of Clark Patterson Lee gave an extensive overview of the Comprehensive Plan Update. We have been working on this for almost a year now. The first public meeting was last September. Have had two public meetings, two targeted public meetings, two meetings with the farmers and many committee meetings and a survey was distributed to about 2,000 addresses. We got over 500 plus back which is a pretty good response rate. The last Comprehensive Plan was done in 1997 and the reason for the update was that there have been changes in the Town since that date and also, many of the recommendations in the last Comp Plan have been implemented. We went through the old plan and checked off the items that have been done or are not relevant, and things that need change. That is all incorporated into the recommendations. The other thing that might be different with this plan is that in terms of zoning and planning, the direction that everyone seems to be taking today is divergent from traditional zoning to a more comprehensive regulation of land use. Traditionally land use simply said you can have this use with these setbacks on this piece of land and this use on this land. Today there seems to be a better understanding that the way it looks, works, feels, the secondary impacts are equally important, in some cases more important. In many locations the regulations regulating use are more flexible allowing mixed uses, but more regulation with street scape, trees, etc.

Mr. Corby reviewed at length the several sections of the draft plan, Community inventory, character areas. Talked about hamlets, village, agriculture, lakefront, etc. Talked briefly about dirt roads and their maintenance, as well as water and sewer and whether or not they should or could be installed throughout the Town. Talked about some of the environmentally sensitive areas in the Town. Talked about the lakefront area and density. In downtown, business areas, you want density because it makes business districts work, it creates activity, makes neighborhoods more viable. But in the hill sides over the lake, there really is not a good public reason why you want density because it would damage the lake. If you have the best storm water management practices that are followed and you develop the area even with those in place you are going to damage the quality of the lake because the intensity of fertilizers used on lawns is higher than on any agricultural field. There are other impacts, chemicals, drugs, things that seep into the water that you just can not prevent. You cannot prohibit development, but there is an interest in limiting density where there are slopes and other environmental features that can impact the lake.

A newsletter will be in the mail in the next few days regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update as well as other information from the Town. There will be a public information meeting regarding the update.

Chairman Hermenet thanked Mr. Corby for his presentation.

On the motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Frank, the minutes of the 7/7/09 meeting were approved. Motion carried unanimously.

Boardmembers talked about promoting conservation, purchase of development rights, etc. and how best to inform residents. Talked about the possibility of an article in the newspaper. Fred will talk to Michele who regularly attends Town Board meetings to see if this is something she could do.

It is anticipated that the announcement for the grants will not be made until the first of the year, with a due date of May 2010.

Chairman Hermenet stated that he will notify everyone if we need to meet in September.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM, by a motion from Bill Johnson, seconded by Andrew Hoover.

Nancy Hollenbeck
Secretary