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MINUTES
June 1, 2023

MEMBER ROLL CALL:

Ralph Lutjen, Chairman	Ted Slader (Alternate) – Present
Marc Ohlson – Present	Emily Bass – Excused
Michael Brooks – Present	Josh Shackford - Present
Mike Mosher – Present	Mike Mauro, Selectmen’s Rep.
Noreen Downs (Alternate) - Present	

OTHERS PRESENT:

Amanda Hayford- Madison TV, Katharine Young, Land Use Boards Administrator, Tim Nolin, Marcia McKenna

MEETING POSTED: This meeting was posted at Madison Town Hall Upper & Lower, Madison & Silver Lake Post Offices on May 24, 2023.

CALL TO ORDER: Lutjen called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

ELEVATION OF ALTERNATES: **Motion** by Lutjen, seconded by Shackford to elevate Slader for this meeting. The motion passed **unanimously**.

APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES:

Motion by Shackford, seconded by Lutjen to approve the May 4, 2023 minutes as written. The motion passed **unanimously**.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

McKenna asked if the Commission would alternate between the alternates Downs and Slader for a variety on the Commission.

Downs stated she would like the Conversation Commission meetings to go back to 7:00 pm.

Lutjen asked the Commission what they should do about the elevation of alternates in the future and for today, they would stick with Slader and Downs could be elevated at the next meeting. The Commission stated they would take this meeting by meeting.

Downs stated she had two items to discuss that were not listed on the agenda. The first item was to talk about the stream crossings and the projects going on in the state and how this impacts things from the storm and she presented her report.

The second item Downs wanted to discuss was the Meena gas station in Effingham and wanted to ask the Commission if they wanted to provide comments to the Town of Effingham and she is also looking for the other boards to participate. Mosher stated that at last night's Selectmen's Meeting, the Selectmen had no interest in providing a letter to the Town of Effingham and he asked why would the Conservation Commission? After discussion amongst the Commission Members, it was decided that this is in Effingham's hands to make the determination of whether to allow the gas station or not and as a Commission, they do not want to participate.

Lutjen asked Downs if she had a report on the culverts. Downs stated she was not sure if there was any impact on the stream crossings from the recent storm and the stream crossings had been previously tested. Downs stated that there is an application for grant funding and the grant is expected to be accepted in August. She stated this funding is to provide for consultants to come to the towns and talk to them about their stream crossings and ones that have been measured they will provide engineering and cost estimates for repairs and fixing of those culverts in the town. She further stated this will happen between September 2024 and December 2025 and that this group will also apply for grant funding to help the town pay for those repairs as it does impact long term. Downs asked the Commission has Madison prioritized their culverts and stream crossings needing attention? Lutjen asked what is the next step, communicating with this organization? Downs stated yes and they will probably come in August or September. She will provide any information she receives.

Mauro stated he does not think the grant will help the town now and the town cannot wait for grant funding as the culverts need to be fixed. Brooks stated he has filed a hazard mitigation plan and it is in Washington DC and has not been approved yet but he did state in order to get federal funds, that all culverts had to be listed. Downs stated she would touch base with Mauro.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chain of Ponds Update: Mike Morin, Conservation Director of USVLT stated he as well as Jennifer Pribble, Executive Director of USVLT and Sally Manikian from the Conservation Fund and Dan Stepanauskas, Board of Directors and also a Madison resident were there to make their presentation. Morin stated USVLT wants to build a partnership with the Town of Madison in the conservation of this property. Morin stated that because of Manikian's good work with the current owner, they are in a good place to enter into a Purchase and Sales Agreement. He further stated they are working through grants and funding right now. Manikian stated Crowe has agreed to a price and he is going to sell the property for conservation to USVLT and they are working on the terms of the contract. Manikian stated the final conservation will happen when the fundraising is completed and that is expected in 2024. Slader asked if the price excluded the four home lots on Forest Pines Road? Manikian confirmed it did. Lutjen asked for a time table of events. Manikian stated they are planning to get into contract with Crowe within the next six weeks with the final conservation happening in the summer of 2024 and the closing of the project will take a few months.

Pribble stated that Manikian reached out to USVLT with only a few days deadline for a Letter of Intent to apply for LCHIP grants and Morin got that out and USVLT was invited apply for LCHIP funding for the property which has a deadline of June 21st. He further stated they also have a grant due by the middle of this month to an anonymous foundation and that these two grants would take a big chunk of the funding needs and they are also pursuing other fundings/grants.

Bergeron stated that at the March Town Meeting the Chain of Ponds was discussed and the importance of it and he asked if there was any funding mechanism or if funds were put towards this or do we have any conservation funds resources? Lutjen stated we have conservation funds but this would have to go before the voters to disburse any funds. Morin stated USVLT will purchase the property in fee and the USVLT would work with the Town of Madison to grant a Conservation Easement so the Town of Madison would have an interest in the property and Madison would contribute the amount of the easement value to USVLT and then the Town of Madison would purchase the conservation easement from USVLT to hold that interest and help with funding the project.

Mauro asked what happens if the Town of Madison does not approve funds towards this purchase? Manikian stated that if the grants are insufficient to cover the total cost of the project, as it is over \$1,000,000.00, that the town is critical to making this happen and if the voters do not approve it, they will have to figure something out. Manikian asked if there is a modest amount the Town of Madison could come up with. Lutjen stated he believes there are funds available for the easement and that this would not affect taxes. Mauro stated at town meeting the voters did not want to spend money and cut the budget and we now have to come up with funds for the storm damage.

Bergeron stated that USVLT wants funds from the town and asked USVLT what is this amount? Morin stated they have not had an opportunity to come up with a figure yet but he could work with one of their appraisers to establish what the conservation value is and they will get that to the commission and he can call the appraiser tomorrow. Morin stated this is a community driven effort.

Nolin stated that the town needs to be on board and the funders will be looking for community involvement and this is very important.

Morin asked the Commission Members if they had the ability tonight to approve supporting this project pending voters' approval and that would be something USVLT could use to say the town is a partner in this in good faith and USVLT can submit grants and call the Town of Madison a partner.

Brooks stated the dollar amount is so critical and if the figure the town is to come up with, not what we have in the bank, there is no guarantee. He further stated do we have the money in the bank and we just need to get access through the legislative body to withdraw to make the contribution or does the town need to raise and appropriate money that we do not already have in the bank.

Pribble stated even if the conservation easement value came in above the point where the town was capped, USVLT would fund raise around this.

Manikian suggested maybe the Town of Madison and USVLT enter in to a non-binding letter of intent. Brooks stated he agreed with this.

Motion by Brooks, seconded by Mauro to begin negotiating a Letter of Intent between USVLT and the Town of Madison to be signed out of session. The motion passed **unanimously** by show of hands of the Commission.

Morin stated they will start working on this right away.

McNair Easement Amendment Update: Downs had nothing to report and unable to talk with Laurie Corron.

Property Review Commitments and Sign-up:

Lutjen stated that Nolin will get a list of sites for property monitoring and bring them to the July meeting. Lutjen stated that Young found a company that may be able to do the digitalizing of the Conservation Land and Easement Property Reports and the cost is about .18 cents per page. Lutjen stated at the next meeting he is looking for a commitment from Members to take on one or two properties and manage them. Shackford asked Nolin if the Commission could do some of the monitoring? Nolin stated yes and there are quite a few the Commission Members can do. Lutjen stated they are trying to be consistent with boundaries and conditions of the properties. Lutjen will meet with Young to figure out the cost.

Review of Master Plan: Lutjen stated he would like to update the Conservation's portion of the Master Plan, that being Chapter 8. Ohlson stated that the Chain of Ponds can be added. Lutjen asked that Young send all Commission Members Chapter 8 of the Master Plan for the Members review and they can contribute any changes or additions at the July meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: Slader asked what is going on with the two demolished vehicles behind the fire station. Brooks stated these are used for training and they have two more trainings to do.

Downs asked Mauro about the appointment of Darren Laughland on May 16th to the Local River Management Advisory Committee and who is he, what does he do and how did he get reappointed and why was the Conservation Commission not aware? Mauro stated Laughland was on this Board already and he is the only one that placed an interest to continuing to be on this Board. Mauro stated this is an advisory board for towns to get information on river quality and Laughland asked the Selectmen if they wanted to reappoint him and they did. Downs stated she would like to have him attend a Conservation Committee meeting.

SELECTMAN'S REPORT: Mauro, Selectmen's Rep., stated there have been complaints about the tree stumps on town property which at some point will be stumped, grinded and chipped and they are waiting on a date for the stumping.

Downs also asked about the DES water test Brooks did and wanted to know what was it for and why was the Conservation Commission not made aware of it? Brooks stated Downs was incorrect and the water sample that was submitted was requested by DES for testing from the fire station well and has this nothing to do with conservation at all.

PLANNING BOARD REPORT: Ohlson stated the Board is going to straighten out their definitions and address RSA 155-E and 1.3b.

ADMINISTRATIVE CORRESPONDENCE:

Budget Drawdown: Lutjen stated there was a disbursement of \$357.23 for the month of April.

Account Updates: The June, 2023 statements had not been received as of the date of this meeting. Lutjen shared with the Commission that they received a check payable to the Madison Conservation Commission in the amount of \$10,216.61 which represents the amount due pursuant to the timber cut.

Conservation Scholarship: Young stated she contacted Bearcamp, Tin Mountain and Squam Lake. Bearcamp had two children and Tin Mountain had two children. Lutjen asked the Commission what they would like to do? He further stated that there have not been any ground rules set and the Commission suggested two scholarships in the amount of \$400.00 at a prior meeting. Brooks stated that the camps administration should let the applicants know that the Conservation Commission is willing to provide scholarship assistance. Ohlson stated this should be tabled for next year and next year make it part of the Conservation Commission's public awareness. Downs stated next year there should be an application and children should write a short essay of what they want to get from camp. Amongst discussion of the Commission Members, they have decided to wait until next year.

Digitalizing Property Town Reports: This was discussed in the Property Review and Sign-ups.

Setting Deadline for Agenda Items: Young stated that anyone wanting to add an Agenda item for the monthly meeting would need to get it to her no later than the Thursday before the monthly scheduled meeting.

Property Review Member Assignments: This was discussed in Property Review Commitments and Sign-up.

Downs asked again if the monthly meeting time could be changed from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. After discussion amongst the Commission, it was decided the meeting will stay at 4:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: By Lutjen, seconded by Mosher to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned with all in favor at 5:35 pm.

Submitted by:

Katharine Young
Land Use Boards Administrator