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MINUTES
February 10, 2024

MEMBER ROLL CALL:

Ralph Lutjen, Chairman – Present
Josh Shackford, Vice Chair – Excused
Michael Brooks – Present
Mike Mosher –Excused
Joy Gray – Present
Marc Ohlson – Excused
Liza Rogerson (Alternate) - Present

Ted Slader (Alternate) – Present
Marcia McKenna - Present

OTHERS PRESENT: Carol Dandeneau - Madison TV and Katharine Young, Land Use Boards Administrator

MEETING POSTED: The Public Hearing was posted in the Madison Town Hall Upper & Lower levels, Madison & Silver Lake Post Offices on February 7, 2025.

CALL TO ORDER: Lutjen called the meeting to order at 4:20 pm. Lutjen stated that the regularly scheduled meeting was scheduled for February 6, 2025 but was rescheduled tonight due to inclement weather.

ELEVATION OF ALTERNATES: **Motion** by Lutjen, seconded by McKenna to elevate Slader and Rogerson to full voting members for this meeting. The motion was voted on and passed **unanimously**.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

December 4, 2024 Minutes:

Motion by Lutjen, seconded by Rogerson to approve the December 4, 2024 minutes as written. There was some discussion about whether these minutes had already been approved at the January meeting. It was clarified that the December minutes had not been approved previously due to lack of quorum, and they were now being approved at this meeting.

The motion was voted on and passed **unanimously**.

January 2, 2025 Minutes: **Motion** by Lutjen, seconded by Brooks to approve the January 2, 2025 minutes as written. The motion was voted on and passed **unanimously**.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Lutjen closed the Public Comment as there was no Public Comment.

OLD BUSINESS:

Tim Nolin – Forest Land Improvement: Nolin was not present for the meeting.

Chain of Ponds Update/Conservation Easement Deed Revisions: Lutjen reported that a meeting had taken place just before this meeting tonight regarding the conservation easement. Substantial progress had been made, with the entire draft easement being reviewed. Plans were made to meet again in March to review completed markups and discuss them with the attorney.

Property Review Commitments: Lutjen mentioned that he would take on the property review commitments for the two absent members.

NEW BUSINESS: Slader mentioned that the date for the event had already been reserved, but a decision needed to be made on the size of the show. He also raised the issue of the event location, noting that last year's attendance at the firehouse had exceeded 80 people, which was significantly higher than usual.

There was discussion about seating arrangements and the possibility of getting additional chairs from the school. The commission members agreed that despite the increased cost, they preferred to maintain the larger program.

Motion by Brooks, seconded by Lutjen that the Madison Conservation Commission will do the full hour presentation with seven animals during Old Home Week. The motion was voted on and passed **unanimously**.

The commission also discussed the idea of having a donation basket at the event to help offset the increased cost.

McKenna had some items she wanted to discuss as follows:

1. McKenna stated that the participation by phone issue that she has brought up before needs to be addressed and should be on the Agenda.
2. McKenna stated she feels strongly that the commission needs an attorney that specializes in land Conservation easements and that we have \$50,000.00 in our Capital Reserve Fund that we could use for this cost.

Regarding the second point, there was a discussion about the competency of the town attorney versus hiring a specialized land trust attorney. Speaker 1 expressed confidence in the town attorney's ability to handle the easement review, citing the established nature of such documents and the benefits of maintaining a relationship with the town's legal counsel.

Gray arrived at 4:35 pm.

Lutjen stated that if we are not happy with our attorney, we will revisit this. McKenna stated that we have money to hire an attorney who specializes in this field. Lutjen stated that it has been agreed to engage the town's attorney and that the attorney will deal with the commission's comments first on the Conservation Easement.

Gray stated that as far as our town attorney, she is very comfortable with him and that he does have real estate experience.

McKenna stated that she feels the monthly meetings are too short and that the commission needs to set new goals and that "new goals" should be on the Agenda.

SELECTMAN'S REPORT: Gray provided updates on several topics as follows:

1. The commission's budget was confirmed to be flatlined for the upcoming year.
2. The digitization of records project was confirmed to be on hold.
3. Green Mountain Conservation Commission requested a 10% increase (\$165) which was discussed. It was decided that the commission would find a way to cover this increase within their existing budget.
4. Updates were provided on ongoing projects such as the watershed management study, Silver Lake dam repairs, and PFAS contamination issues.

Lutjen mentioned the importance of the Chain of Ponds conservation easement was emphasized, with noting its significance as potentially the highest quality conservation property in the town.

PLANNING BOARD REPORT: Ohlson was not present at the meeting.

Administrative Correspondence: Young had nothing to report.

Lutjen read aloud the updates on the accounts as noted below.

Updated February 6, 2025

Account Balances as of January 31, 2025

Forest Maintenance Account: **\$64,704.90 - \$2,772.50 + = .56 cents interest = \$61,932.96**

Conservation Land Use Change Tax: **\$225,768.09 + \$2.04 Interest = \$225,770.13**

Conservation Gift Account: **\$261.76**

Capital Reserve Account: **Balance as of February 2, 2025 is \$67,113.12**

Account Balances as of December 31, 2024

Forest Maintenance Account: **\$64,704.36 = .54 cents interest = \$64,704.90**

Conservation Land Use Change Tax: **\$225,766.23 + \$1.86 Interest = \$225,768.09**

Conservation Gift Account: **\$261.76**

Capital Reserve Account: **Balance as of February 2, 2025 is \$67,113.12**

There was a brief discussion about the possibility of using funds from the Capital Reserve for the digitization project, but it was determined that it was too late to create a warrant article for this purpose.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Brooks, seconded by Lutjen to adjourn the meeting. The motion was voted on and passed **unanimously** and the meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Submitted by:

Katharine Young
Land Use Boards Administrator