

Danby Conservation Advisory Council

Minutes

27 February 2012

Members Present

Joel Gagnon, Tom Gavin, Dan Klein

Members Absent

Mary Ann Barr, Jake Brenner

Non-Members Present

Guy Krogh, Ronda Roaring

Call-to-Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Joel Gagnon at 7:30 p.m.

Pro-Bono Lawyer

Joel had announced via email that Guy Krogh of Thaler & Thaler in Ithaca and the Town of Danby's attorney, had volunteered to work pro-bono for the CAC. Guy stated that he would stay for the entire meeting and would probably be available to attend other CAC meetings.

Open Meetings Ruling

Guy stated that the CAC, as an advisory committee, was not covered by the Open Meetings laws. However, in the interest of transparency, it was decided that the CAC would try to hold itself to the laws nonetheless. Therefore, a copy of the minutes should be sent by the secretary to the town clerk and to the Town\$B!G(Bs website coordinator. The Chair will provide a copy of the agenda and other materials to be passed out at the meetings to the website coordinator. CAC members wishing to pass out materials for discussion should provide them to the Chair as far in advance of the meeting as possible.

Previous Minutes

Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting was deferred until the next meeting.

What the CAC Hopes to Accomplish

Guy was given the floor and asked the members what the CAC hoped to accomplish to give him a better idea how to advise the group. Dan and Joel stated they wanted to preserve land rather than to "manage" land. Dan said the CAC should go slow and not feel obligated to "grow." The discussion went on for nearly an hour with Guy talking about a variety of issues, including how much it can cost in taxes, fees and services to create an easement, how to save money in various ways, different issues and problems that can arise in dealing with landowners and the benefit of creating a template easement document.

Resignation

Dan announced the resignation of Julie Kulik. A brief discussion ensued as to whether Julie should be replaced and other vacant positions on the CAC be filled. Joel thought a couple more people on the CAC would "strengthen the group." He stated that there was

a "learning curve" to what the members did. Dan was not in favor of replacing Julie. Tom said he was inclined to agree with Dan. Ronda said it was more important to find volunteers to do a variety of tasks that will be coming up in the future. The matter will be taken up again next month, when more members should be present.

Scoping Document

Joel had sent out via email a draft scoping document a few hours before the meeting. Ronda responded via email that the document didn't conform to the usual format of a scoping document and recommended it be reworked, adding more information especially about who was going to do the work, how much it would cost and where the money would come from, even if the document were handed in late. At the meeting Dan and Tom said they saw nothing wrong with the document. Dan moved and Tom seconded the approval of the draft document. It was approved by the three members present.

Brochure

Since Mary Ann was absent, the matter of the brochure and mission statement were deferred.

DAN Articles

Joel brought up the matter of writing articles for the Danby Area News (DAN) and volunteered to write them, the topics of which were unspecified. Dan stated that he didn't see the benefit of articles in the DAN and worried that they might encourage more residents to want to protect their land than the CAC could manage. Ronda thought the articles would create public awareness and would be beneficial. Joel was authorized to write the articles.

Next Meeting

Guy asked when the next meeting would be and if there was anything the group would like him to do or provide for the next meeting. Ronda suggested a talk on confidentiality. Guy asked if the group would like him to bring sample conservation easements, suggesting that he provide several examples, reflecting a range of complexity. That offer was embraced by the group. Guy agreed to email samples of easements to the members and interested parties prior to the next meeting.

Big Tree Program

It had been suggested at a previous meeting that there be a big tree program in Danby where an attempt would be made to document (record and photograph) the largest trees in Danby. Tom said he had found on the Internet a form used for submitting large trees to America Forests which explained the process for documenting large trees but that this was a complicated process that would be better done by someone experienced in the process. He named Danby resident and Arnot Forest manager Don Schaufler as such a person. Dan asked Tom if he would be willing to contact Don to feel him out about documenting the big trees in Danby. Tom agreed to do this.

Moth Program

Bill Evans had volunteered to have a program on local moths on May 13, 2012, possibly at his residence. It wasn't clear from his offer what time he had in mind. Ronda offered to contact Bill for more information.

Jennings Pond

Ronda brought up the matter of Jennings Pond being owned by the State (under the management of OPRHP) and the fact that the Town pays for most of the services provided at the Pond and that Tim Joseph of OPRHP had stated in an email to her that OPRHP had no money to finish a trail next to the pond. Her feeling is that the area called Jennings Pond, including the woods, etc. could be managed just as well by the Town rather than OPRHP and asked if the CAC would be interested in looking into suggesting to the Town that it assume ownership of Jennings Pond. Guy stated that transfer of ownership of property from the State to the Town would be very complicated and could be costly. Joel, Dan and Tom thought the CAC shouldn't get involved in such a matter.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed for 26 March 2012 at 7:30 p.m. at the Danby Town Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ronda Roaring, Secretary pro tem