

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
The Conservation Commission
City of Milford
October 21, 2008

1. Roll Call – Bill Poutray, Oden Seaholm, Carolyn Greer, Danielle Bercury, Maureen Mauro and guest Mike DeGrego.
2. Review of previous meeting's minutes – The minutes were reviewed and accepted unanimously.
3. Public Comments – no public comments.
4. Old Business
 - a) Downs House/Property – Bill attended the Open Space Committee meeting which was attended by Mayor Richetelli and John Staneski, VP of Operations at Milford Hospital. Milford Hospital has offered to purchase the 1.8 acres of woodland behind the Downs House from the City of Milford which currently owns it. The proposed purchase price is \$670,000. After the sale, \$320,000 of the proceeds would be returned to the Open Space fund from which it was originally borrowed. The Downs House and the land it sits on would not be part of the purchase.

The land would be used as overflow parking as required by Zoning Regulations if the hospital is to complete its plan to build two additional buildings on land adjacent to the woodland. This would become what is described as a “campus” with office space leased to various doctors. The Open Space Committee requested that the hospital consider designs that would provide both aesthetic and environmental enhancements such as an enhanced buffer between it and the historic district, lighting that would minimize light pollution, minimal impervious surface, and a “healing garden” area. Mrs. Staneski assured the committee that in the interests of being good corporate citizens, they would strongly consider such design features. Further, Mr. Staneski explained that the purchase of the property would be done by Torry Corporation, a for-profit entity that is a part owner of the hospital. This means that the land and improvements would be taxable. Mr. Staneski also stated that Milford Hospital has no interest currently in purchasing the adjacent property on Rt. 1 that has been the site of Paul's Famous Hamburgs.

a. (Cont'd)

All MCC recommendations are dependent on a certainty that the open space funds would be returned to the Open Space Account for its intended use. The commission is in favor of using the \$320,000 to partially fund the purchase of former watershed land off Burnt Plains Road or other appropriate lands consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development.

The commission members agreed that a letter should be composed from The Milford Conservation Commission recommending that the city sell the 1.8 acres to Milford Hospital provided that the hospital agrees to reasonable design upgrades as outlined previously in these minutes. There should be a point in the letter that the city must return \$320,000 to the Open Space fund which was borrowed for the original purchase of the house and land. Bill will compose a letter. He will also ask in the letter if the Milford Conservation Commission will have an opportunity to review the plans. Danielle said this letter should be sent to the Board of Alderman close to the hearing date of this project. Maureen Mauro will speak to one of the Board of Alderman to determine when this hearing will take place.

There was a question raised if this property is part of a historic district which means this issue would have to go in front of the Milford Historic Commission to receive a certificate of appropriateness. Bill will call Dick Platt to get further information regarding the historical aspects of this project. Also, Carolyn Greer offered to look into the structure and by-laws of the Historic District Commission to determine if any procedures need to be implemented to sell property which lies within such a district.

b) P & Z Subcommittee Meeting – Carol Dunn, Carolyn Greer, Danielle Bercury and Bill Poutray recently met with Jeanne Cervin and Victor Ferrante of P & Z. Both expressed a willingness to work with the Milford Conservation Commission and will forward plans to them as long as they are pertinent to what the Milford Conservation Commission is empowered to comment on, i.e., open space, natural resources, etc. P & Z will supply the Milford Conservation Commission one copy of P & Z regulations, inventory and Plan of Conservation and Development. If P & Z plans to change any of their regulations, the Milford Conservation Commission should review these changes and make recommendations. It was agreed that the Milford Conservation Commission can propose an amendment and make suggestions regarding open space and conservation. There was a question brought up about the ownership of Beaver Brook. It was mentioned at the P & Z meeting that Kingdom Life had purchased this property. This will have to be clarified since The Barth Fund stipulates that the Milford Conservation Commission use Barth Fund money for the upkeep of Beaver Brook.

- b) (Cont'd)
Further, Victor Ferrante suggested that MCC work on a draft of regulations for "micro farms" such as the one on Clark Street. It was further suggested that Letty Malone be contacted as she may already be working on that issue.
- c) Commission Recruiting – Bill has tried to contact John Vanacore with no luck. His term expires in December 2008. Bill has also been informed that Judy Weyant, a former commissioner, has expressed an interest in rejoining the commission. Bill will contact her.
- d) Student Conservation Association – Bill handed out an email from Vincent Piselli outlining a proposal for the SCA. After reviewing this information, several questions were raised. Vincent was unable to be at the meeting, so this proposal will be brought up at the November meeting.
- e) Conservation Office – Mike DeGrego has volunteered to help organize the office. Bill told him that he can get the key from Tom Ivers office which is next door. Carolyn Greer said she is available on Monday and Friday to assist with this project. Bill is also interested in helping. Mike will take an initial look at the office and then email everyone to coordinate this effort.
- f) Other Items – Maureen Mauro received a price of \$60.00 from Marlin Printers to laminate the map. The commission approved this. Maureen also downloaded information from conservation commissions in various towns, i.e., Old Lyme, CT and Hanover, New Hampshire. Bill mentioned that Shelton has an extensive website. Maureen spoke to Mayor Richetelli and he told her The Milford Conservation Commission can make any changes to their website.
- g) Maureen Mauro will meet with Mayor Richetelli to try and determine the status of grant funding for improvements to Eisenhower Park. Maureen also plans to arrange a meeting with Bruce Kolwicz, Director of DPW, to discuss building a stronger working relationship between MCC and DPW, particularly on issues of maintenance and improvement of natural open space and other natural resources.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 18, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Berberich
Minutes not approved by the commission

