

GROTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes

October 23, 2004

Chairman Bruce Clements called the posted meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. at Orion Way. Commissioners Peter Morrison, Craig Auman, Marshall Giguere, and Kris Corwin were present. Trails Committee member Vic Burton was also present as was Conservation Assistant Barbara Ganem. Residents Kenn Jackson (23 Orion Way), Bob Wilson (26 Orion Way), Gerald Neely (30 Orion Way), and John O'Sullivan (36 Orion Way) were present as well.

Chairman Clements explained that the Commission is here to discuss with residents the use and demarcation of the trail leading to the Battenwoods Conservation Area behind the residences. The residents at 36 and 30 Orion Way noted that they have the same landscape service, and it would be difficult to explain to them not to mow the trail area. The trail posts could serve as a guide for leaving a 4.5' – 5' wide swath unmown. Commissioners noted that it is the Commission's desire that the trail be recognizable to the public.

Residents asked if the builder had been invited to the meeting, and B. Ganem said no notification had been sent to him. Members recommended some kind of differentiation between the lawn and the trail, and that gravel or mulch could be considered.

Chairman Clements also commented that there is an Order of Conditions on these residences, and there are several conditions which must be met before a Certificate of Compliance is issued. Mr. O'Sullivan indicated that he had made this a contingency in the purchase of his house. P. Morrison said our only concern is the town-owned land, and the gravel pathway to access the detention pond. Grass is not inviting to the public. The trail posts have to be put in. B. Clements suggested contacting the builder, Joe Flaherty, about putting in bark mulch. K. Corwin asked how wide the trail is, and it was estimated to be about 20'. B. Clements observed that, ideally, there would be no mowing between the posts. P. Morrison said he was okay with a 4' wide trail with gravel, with the posts placed between 8' and 9' feet apart.

Vic Burton estimated that 4 or 5 posts could be placed to guide people to the conservation land where the woods begin. The trail leads around the detention basin to the right and should hug the tree line on Lot 5 (30 Orion Way). There would be a post at the entrance to the woods. Commissioners commented that typically there is a wooden sign at the entrance to conservation land that identifies the conservation area. John O'Sullivan (36 Orion Way) stated that he would have no problem with the sign being put at the edge of the detention basin which is on his property. Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by K. Corwin, it was

VOTED: to authorize the Trails Committee to install the sign at the detention basin, providing homeowner Mr. O'Sullivan (36 Orion Way) gives written permission for the sign to be located there.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by K. Corwin, it was

VOTED: to contact the builder to request a 4' wide bark mulch trail from the sidewalk to the beginning of the woods, the location of which will be worked out with the Trails Committee and the neighbors.

Regarding the installation of posts, there is agreement with the Trails Committee that they will have to be placed wide enough to allow machinery to access the detention basin for maintenance.

B. Clements also noted that the Order of Conditions for this subdivision included provisions for a no-disturb buffer, generally at 50 feet, but following the erosion control line shown on the plan. Members noted that it is a sensitive site, and K. Corwin commented that Blue-spotted Salamanders are located on vernal pools on Lots 3 and 6. The default rules and regulations were previously mailed to residents. Those present asked what the rule is on snowmobile traffic,

and C. Auman pointed out that no snowmobiles or recreational vehicles are to travel within 150' of a residence without the landowner's permission. Members recommended that the local police be called, but the environmental police could also be notified.

Residents asked if it was the responsibility of the builder to put in the demarcation at the edge of the 50 foot no-disturb. Members said this could be fencing, boulders, or shrubs, and the responsibility for this falls to the owner of the property.

Vic Burton noted that putting the trail too close to the trees on Lot 5 will mean that the trees have to be pruned in the future. He also suggested that it would be advantageous to remove sod before placing the bark mulch on the trail area.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by C. Auman, it was

VOTED: to authorize an amount of \$75,000 for the Commission's request for the Conservation Fund for the October 25, 2004 Town Meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara V. Ganem
Conservation Assistant

Approved as amended 11/9/04