

Meeting Minutes

Date: April 27th, 2010

Location: Town Hall

Attendees:

Commissioners: Mike Roberts, Leo Laverdure, Chase Duffy, Carl Flowers, Steve Webber, Carl Canner, Richard Hewitt

Conservation Committee: Bruce Easom, Ryan Lambert, Marshall Giguere, David Pitkin, Wayne Addy, Peter Morrison

Commissioners absent: Chris Christie

Minutes taken by: Stephanie Strickland

Speaker: Peter Flinker

Discussion

- Carl F: Do you have any idea how much land in Groton is conversation land?
- Peter: 33%.
- Peter: How do we balance remaining land with necessary development? I was surprised at how much of the land in the forest outskirts is prime farmland. I know probably everyone in here is interested in farmland and recreation and most people are interested in things such as water quality.
- Peter: This is a map of water resources. It's usually more efficient to make two separate maps: one for water quality and one for water supply. Essentially what we want to do is Groton's bio map. Scientists use the bio map to find out how to help keep rare species alive. One thing we have to do is find out what to do with the data.
- Bruce: My opinion is that we spend a disproportional amount of time on the wetlands and we need to find a balance.
- Marshall: Do these wetlands come from the Mass G.I.S?
- Peter: Yes.
- Marshall: It's important to conserve the uplands too because many species only go to the wetlands to breed.
- Carl F: What is the best way to manage the forest?
- Peter: Again we don't have enough information on it.
- Bruce: There's an R.F.P about to hit the street to hire a town forest manager.
- Peter: Do you have any kind of forest committee? That might be an action item on the town master plan.

Peter shows a map that divides Groton's land into three levels of importance, from dark green to white.

- Peter: This gives more value to land that serves more purposes. Places like the town forest are in dark green, because it is along the river and houses many habitats. It is important to map out the most important areas to be able to save plants, animals, and improve our water supply.

- Steve: I predict that the most important thing is to protect the rural character in Groton.
- Bruce: Is there some sort of point system you've used to look at rural character?
- Peter: No, not a point system. It is not very difficult to map things like that out. One of the things we're going to talk about at the meeting one most the 13th, is what the most important areas are to focus on in the master plan.
- Bruce: My understanding is the conservation committee is not allowed to give out a short term loan to farmers who want to use our land? Do we need state level rules and regulations changed?
- Peter: My personal opinion is the states rules and regulations have been a waste of time for the past ten years.
- Leo: Do you have the ability to make maps that show changes over years?
- Peter: It all depends on how the data was arranged.
- Bruce: What is the next step?
- Peter: You should all come on the 13th and give us an ear full.
- Bruce: It looks like we need to dedicate a lot of our time to turning these maps into action items.

Sustainability Committee discussion after presentation:

- Mike: I would like to summarize what we heard and discuss it a little.
- Mike: The public has a right to the resources and how can you control it enough to not lose it? When resource areas are overseen by fewer people they run better.
- Leo: This is why there is the argument of the privatization of others. There have been a few good solutions, such as, the Icelanders with the sheep. There was a simulation where people have to maximize their revenue. In almost every case they would over fish and ruin the fishery. One group solved the problem. They refused to plan unless other groups shared information with them. It was still competitive, but they could see how much was left.
- Mike: Seeing the big picture is a big part of that.
- Carl F: Many people are involved with things they don't have experience with. I haven't heard anyone give a definition of a farm. No one between the ages of twenty five and thirty five would be able to afford to buy my farm and farm it. No one is looking at those issues.
- Mike: It is important for people to see how crucial farming was in Groton's history and still is.
- Steve: Are there any examples where a herd of animals will share cooperatively?
- Carl F: Honey bees have a high concentration.
- Steve: Natural selection is a very powerful force.
- Leo: Cooperative behavior emerges from the few messages they can communicate. If there's a lot of food they will often over procreate.
- Mike: Animals don't eat more than they need. Humans take more than they need. Animals are self limited, but they don't consciously think about it. When you think about the layers we're looking at, there's a lot of things you can do with them. If you look at them as blocks, you can see that only some of them have everything.

- Leo: One of the most interesting things was the notion that we have twenty years in which it's all built out. Whatever we can protect in the next twenty years is all there's going to be to protect.
- Steve: I remember hearing that this are can't sustain more than twenty thousand, which I don't think will ever happen.
- Mike: The master plan is important, but we should keep the indicators that we're working on, in mind.
- Leo: Another thing is your question of protecting the commons. The key the fish game was how many were left.
- Mike: We know that once you get down o an unviable number, you can't get back.
- Leo: There comes a point where people have to choose a path and make a decision. One way you'll do really well for the short term and then plumage and the other is more secure and you'll slowly rise, which is better for everyone.
- Leo: I'm reading a book on the perception gap and it says we either perceive it as way higher or way lower. One solution is communication, which allows us to obtain factual information and find out how people feel. This is why our meeting next Wednesday is so important; we can see how people feel about sustainability.
- Mike: Leo can I have you send a list of the people attending and the questions? Ok this was a good meeting. I encourage everyone to attend the sustainability café on May 5th.

Motion to Adjourn