

**Casco Open Space Commission
Minutes
January 17, 2011**

Members Present: Grant Plummer, Jim Stepp, Eric Dibner, Barbara York
Pam Edwards
Absent: Lisa Willey-Critchfield

Grant called the meeting to order at 7:07.

Minutes of November 15, 2010 were adopted as presented.

Updates by Commissioners and follow-up on tasks –

Eric distributed the communication plan as adopted in November (see attached), highlighting the items COSC had set as priorities. Pam recommended putting dates and assignments on it.

Eric created a draft for a brochure, now being edited by Lisa.

Grant said Spenser is willing to make a website for us. We should give him an example of the layout/style we want or some content to plug in. The reason for a separate site is the Town website only allows so much to be added and a separate site allows easier updating.

Grant reported on meeting in Bethel with SWOAM about funding for trail construction, water crossings etc. and the need to have a management plan. Grant also attended the WoodsWISE workshop, which concerns funding to assist with a forest management plan. Presumpscot River Watershed Project sees forest protection as water quality protection. Eric said this funding could work for two larger Town parcels. Questions: What would the cost be? When does funding get applied? Do we need to have the forester lined up? Applications are due by January 31. Eric will find out what the applicability is, how to get Town's funding match. Barbara will discuss it with the Town Manager. It was moved and approved to **apply to MFS for stewardship planning for Town's parcels over 10 acres.**

Jim distributed materials East Haddam (CT) has developed for evaluating properties and managing them. He also distributed samples of signage for

boundaries and info about hunting. The East Haddam property evaluation form might be applicable to COSC's work; it is available online at: https://imageserv3.team-logic.com/mediaLibrary/190/Open_Space_Priority_Criteria_1.pdf.

Work plan items –

Re Town Properties: Meeting with Recreation is important regarding Town properties. Grant will invite Beth and send her a map of properties. The Commission discussed the need for an evaluation tool, a checklist for each property and what criteria they must meet for various uses. Best use may be no use at all; non-use may protect the river, for example. Should the Town dispose of the small lots long the Crooked River? They have value to the river as natural environment. None are buildable. COSC should say how the Town needs to manage (or not manage) each property. Uses should follow evaluation and be substantiated by back-up materials, map, reports.

Re public workshops: COSC could sponsor an event with someone else doing a presentation, e.g. Portland Water District re Crooked River. Homework before next meeting is to think of topics for workshops.

Re Hacker's Hill: There is still interest voiced in the community. Grant says the more information available the better. He will talk with Carrie Walia at Loon Echo Land Trust about how the Commission could have a role organizing public energy.

Eric will send Commissioners an email of to-do's.

The meeting was adjourned.