

**Casco Open Space Commission  
Minutes  
December 21, 2009  
Casco Public Library**

Commissioners present: Grant Plummer, Lisa Willey-Critchfield, Jim Stepp, Eric Dibner

Absent: Barbara York

Others present: Pamela Edwards

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m.

**The minutes of November 16, 2009 were adopted as distributed.**

Updates by Commissioners –

Commission web page – Grant spoke with the Town Manager, who said all postings for the Commission web page should go through Pam Griffin. The minutes and agendas, as well as conservation documents should get posted.

Commission mail collects at the Town Office. Grant will pick it up. Recent mail included the *Sebago Lake Watershed News*, which was passed around. Available at: [http://www.pwd.org/pdf/water\\_resources/WN\\_09\\_without.pdf](http://www.pwd.org/pdf/water_resources/WN_09_without.pdf).

The Manager has asked for an update for Selectmen; Lisa will set a time with them. The Commission also should be reviewing what is going on with Planning Board; Grant will contact Sandy Fredricks, the Secretary, about how to do that. The Manager also wants the Commission to consider its educational charge. The Commission should let the Board of Selectmen know when any workshops are scheduled.

Re Hacker's Hill: Eric reported the owners had a discussion with Trust for Public Land (TPL) and Loon Echo Land Trust and TPL will research what are potential funding sources and whether to get an appraisal.

Commission's mission –

Pam facilitated work regarding a mission statement. The Commissioners voiced their visions.

Jim – Land should be a certain size to be of interest, rather than putting effort into little lots. There should be an inventory of all existing public lands and protected lands (e.g., wetlands). A goal is to protect the habitats that support the animals.

Lisa – The work is to define, identify, and protect undeveloped land, open space and wildlife corridors. One focus is linear recreation opportunities. Define the value of lands to protect.

Eric – Growing our rural community with open space available for all to use. Provide tools and ways for the people of Casco to understand its natural resources, protect its rural character, and make open spaces available for the public in the future, using community education, partnerships and traditional or innovative mechanisms.

Grant – We all like it here and it is our home. A focus should be places to go for outdoor recreation. The Commission should see the bigger picture.

Lisa – It is important to get other community people excited about those things.

Jim – The Commission should not make rules that would be unenforceable.

Commissioners agreed to each write down a brief statement of what we will do, how we will do it, and our guiding values. Eric will send drafts around for discussion.

Basic elements:

1. Preserving open space for public access, appropriate use, and natural resource value ...for future generations (of all beings)
2. Defining and inventorying open space, evaluating and categorizing, identifying connections, sorting/setting priorities, focusing on public use, identifying financing/acquisition mechanisms and management methods, community education, communicating with Board of Selectman, working with Parks and Recreation and other groups
3. Values - Large parcels, diversity, inspiring, for the future, public participation

The Commission needs more information about what is the tax-deductibility of donations. Should they be earmarked for particular purpose?

TPL Greenprint project –

Eric reported that a number of Towns, including Casco, have put the question of project funding on town meeting warrant. The whole project will take 12-16 months (starting in February). Benefits of participation include access to a layered database detailed enough to provide parcel information. The Commission could identify part of future budgets for updating data.

There was discussion of joining the Maine Association of Conservation Commissions. Grant said the Manager felt that the Commission should have a separate membership from the Conservation Committee. **Motion approved to sign up with MeACC, and Lisa would take care of it (Plummer moved, Willey-Critchfield seconded, unanimous).**

Meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Next meeting will be 1/18/10.