

Casco Open Space Commission Meeting Minutes – Final

Meeting Date: August 21, 2017

Call to Order: ~ 6:40 P.M.

Present: Open Space – Chairwoman Barbara York, Eric Dibner, Frank Kantor, Thomas Peaslee and Keith Morehouse

August Minutes: The draft was changed for a spelling error and unanimously approved.

July Minutes Approval: The record of July meeting minutes, which has not yet been approved, will be reviewed by Commission members at the October meeting and posted. Earlier the meeting notes had been temporarily lost; approval was deferred pending successful recovery.

Agenda: Reviewed and accepted, with minor changes after short discussion.

Old Business:

State Park Road Property (~50-Ac.); Both this parcel and the 302 parcel (~70-acre) were discussed regarding long-term management and timber harvest in the short-term. At the July COSC meeting, reportedly, the group unanimously endorsed sending a note to the Town Manager/Select Board supporting selective cutting of merchantable timber on the State Park parcel. At this meeting (August), COSC members supported adding to that note an endorsement to selectively harvest timber at the 302 property (ca. 70 ac.), as well, in the interest of forest stand improvement. Forest Stewardship Plans developed in 2012 for the two areas estimated that the 302 parcel had not been harvested in 25-30 years and the State Park Road parcel possibly never, but not, at least, for many years. COSC articulated steps to proceed with handling the matter; those were covered in the June minutes. Ultimately, the Select Board would need to approve the timber harvests. Whether or not the harvest contract is subject to a bidding process, harvest plan(s) should become an integral part of the application(s). There was an expressed desire to have the harvesting agent ID and save some old growth (as appropriate). It was also a consensus of the group that revenues from harvest would come back to the Commission to help offset land acquisition funds loss vis-a-vis the Berry Park purchase.

Town Land Management; Management of Town lands was again a topic of discussion. The plan is to get this topic on the agenda of the Select Board soon in order to get a broader perspective, more detailed information on how existing services are conducted and a decision on who manages which lands - to put the matter to rest.

Letters; There is a single letter remaining to be sent to a landowner who contacted COSC about their willingness to sell property to the Town.

New Business:

Letter to Landowners/Meeting Date Change; A landowner-COSC discussion regarding the future status of the landowner's property has been scheduled for the September meeting. The September meeting date has been set back a week, from the 18th to the 25th

Award; Eric brought to the meeting an Award of Recognition for COSC from the Maine Association of Conservation Commissions. Eric also brought a copy of the recent Loon Echo Land Trust mailing to the community that announced a 30-year celebration of organization establishment and resource protection work. LELET was recently fully accredited by the national group Land Trust Alliance as a bona fide land trust organization for establishment and continuing commitment to the highest standards set out by the accrediting agency for non-governmental resource conservation agencies.

Focus Areas; Keith gave an update on his work to provide a comprehensive listing of Town properties that are either within the focus area boundary lines or those that the boundary lines intersect. The listing is virtually complete and should more readily allow location and evaluation of the importance of open space properties in and around focus areas. This work was aided in a very important way by the assistance of the Town's Assessor. Keith also gave an update on the most recent discussion with landowners on State Park Road who have offered their property to the Town.

Public Participation: None

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by Barbara about 8:00 P.M. As previously noted, the next COSC meeting is September 25, 2017, at 6:30 P.M. in the Town Center meeting room.

Submitted by Keith A. Morehouse