

## Casco Open Space Commission Meeting Minutes – Draft

Meeting Date: November 20, 2017

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

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

Current Agenda and September Minutes: Tom moved approval, Barbara seconded – all approved.

### Old Business:

State Park Road Sale Offer; The status of the pending purchase of a 11.5 ac. property on State Park Road by the Town of Casco was discussed briefly. Barbara provided a synopsis of the actions taken at the last Select Board meeting to move this open space bargain purchase along. The Select Board voted to place the purchase on a warrant to be decided by the townspeople at the Town Meeting in the summer of 2018. Meanwhile, action is being taken to ensure the Town's property interest will be protected until the Town Meeting decision.

Also on the State Park Road ~49-acre parcel, the status of the timber harvest was discussed briefly. Timber harvest is underway; the management company overseeing the harvest has reported to the Town Manager that the work is going well.

Land Offer (Conservation Easement) to the Town For Open Space Purposes; The Commission discussed a couple aspects of this matter. The first is that, in addition to the Google Earth viewing that is available at the Town Office, we would like to have at least some of the members do an on-the-ground inspection to get a sense of "place" and the associated conservation values. Keith will call the landowner to find some open dates, but it will very likely be after the deer season. Second, Eric provided a sample conservation easement model for consideration, which the group then discussed somewhat with regard to applicability and content. Apparently, formulating and negotiating a conservation easement agreement is unprecedented by the Town of Casco. No doubt the process will have to be worked through with a fair amount of guidance from existing documents and by those who have had comparable experience. Keith volunteered to contact the landowner with reassurance of our intention to move ahead with the easement.

Open Space Conservation Ordinance and Casco Open Space Plan; Much of the remaining meeting time was used to opening up a dialogue about review and update, as appropriate, of the Open Space Conservation Ordinance and the Casco Open Space Plan. Thus, not so much emphasis was placed on reviewing line-by-line as there was about an overview of items that could be described more simply as approaches to amendment, time involved, the level of detail that we could/should add or remove, editing, etc. The discussion was quite open and free-ranging. Obviously, more time will have to be devoted to arriving at a common understanding of how to proceed – a problem probably inherent in most endeavors of this sort.

A part of this discussion was that of focus areas, whether there was sufficient detail in describing the values within each or if the values named generally are sufficient and if there should be priorities. This quickly segued into a discussion of lands/parcels within the focus areas that are currently for sale. And, that evolved into a related discussion of the budget situation, i.e., what is currently in the Town's COSC acquisition and operations budgets – also what will be provided in the near-term and what strategies are available to bring funds to any future acquisitions.

New Business: None

Public Participation: None

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by Barbara about 8:50, after a motion by Barbara to do so, seconded by Eric, and unanimous approval. The next COSC meeting is December 18, 2017, at 6:30 P.M. in the Town Center meeting room.

Submitted by Keith A. Morehouse