

Casco Open Space Commission Meeting Minutes – Final

Meeting Date: April 23, 2018

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

Present: Open Space – Chairwoman Barbara York, Keith Morehouse, Tom Peaslee, Frank Kantor and Eric Dibner; Public Participant Dana Watkins

Current Agenda and December Minutes: Eric moved approval, Tom seconded – all approved.

Old Business:

State Park Road Sale Offer; Keith reviewed the contacts he has had with landowners of property, Grant and Austin, who have been involved in actions aimed at adding to the Town's open space through bargain purchase. Both properties now have Finance Committee and Select Board approval for articles on the Town Meeting warrant, and purchase and sale agreements are securely in place.

Focus Area Conservation Easement Status; Keith is still working on this item, there is yet one more piece of tax benefits information and a letter to provide the landowner.

Status of COSC Open Space Budget Request; The budget requests and results from the meetings at which this matter was necessary to be discussed and approved, Finance and Select Board, were reviewed by the Commission.

Open Space Ordinance and Open Space Plan; It seems that Commission members have only been partially successful in review and making recommendations for these two documents. The reasons are varied, including an absence of some members over the winter and that this work has had a lower priority with respect to issues before the Commission. The Commission has resolved to move back to placing it as higher priority work, including more detail in focus area sections. However, any recommended changes will not find their way to the 2018 Town Meeting in June.

Landowner Letter Distribution to Focus Area Landowners; Keith volunteered to get a "strawman" copy to the Commission members for their review before the May meeting.

New Business:

Open Space Warrants for Town Meeting; still very speculative at meeting time!

Town Meeting Information Supporting Open Space; As noted in the last meeting notes, the discussion involved what, if anything, the Commission should/could be doing to provide supporting information to Town Meeting attendees and potential attendees about Open Space warrants, and how approval could help to further the cause of having approved the 2018 articles and the future conservation of open space in the Town of Casco. Using public media was a recommendation, emphasizing the fact that one area is a natural for more accessible recreational opportunities, which would supplement existing and

adjacent Town acreage, and the other would if approved be the areas to meet the purpose(s) of the 2006 Open Space plan on conserving natural features in Focus Areas.

Miscellaneous Discussion; Members reviewed the situation with regard to Owl Pond and what is needed to reach out again to landowners to gain support for open space there, which prompted a short discussion of a Hancock Lumber letter regarding its lands. In addition, the members briefly touched on the matter that there is/was another parcel of land for sale at The Heath in the focus area and that, perhaps, we should investigate the situation there. [From the last notes...it was noted, I believe, that the amount realized from the timber sale on Town property on State Park Road was not known. Since that time we've learned that the amount is on the order of \$10K+.]

Public Participation: Dana Watkins, the only public participant, was given the option to add to the discussion throughout the meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned about 8:50 P.M., with unanimous approval – after Barbara moved and Tom seconded adjournment. The next scheduled COSC meeting is May 21, 2018, at 6:30 P.M., in the Town Center meeting room.

Submitted by Keith A. Morehouse