

Minutes
Hogback Preservation Commission
Marlboro, Vermont

The January 16, 2012 regular meeting of the Hogback Preservation Commission was called to order at 5:20 p.m. at the Marlboro Town Office by Hal Himmelstein, chair.

Members Present: Bob Engel, Hal Himmelstein, Ed Metcalfe, and Jim Tober

Members Absent: Christine Colella, Mike Purcell

Others Attending: Pieter van Loon (Vermont Land Trust) and Patrick Johnson (Marlboro Elementary School/"Fire and Stone" program)

The minutes of the November 14, 2011 Regular Meeting were approved as distributed.

Officer and Committee Reports

Chair's Report: The Select Board, at its December 8, 2011 meeting, requested that the Commission revisit its recommended 2012 Annual Conservation Area budget and consider whether it would break out a portion of the money from the budget's "stipends and MES Day" line to support the 2012 Vermont Wildlife Festival. (See Old Business, below.) The Select Board approved the overall 2012 budget recommendation of \$3,800.

HMCA Report: The HMCA board of directors will hold its Annual Meeting in June 2012. Prior to the meeting, HMCA plans to begin work on a biodiversity inventory and initiate planning for an interpretive trail. HMCA's officers expressed the group's continuing support for MES Day activities in early June.

Conservation Commission Liaison Report: No report.

Planning Commission Liaison Report: The Planning Commission continues its work on updating the town's zoning regulations and will hold additional public meetings to gather community input.

Southern Vermont Natural History Museum Report: The museum did not receive the Transportation Enhancement grant for which it had applied; it is still awaiting word on the outcome of its Deerfield River Watershed grant application for interpretative signage in the Conservation Area.

Vermont Land Trust Report: VLT and the Commission are awaiting a report, being prepared by Audubon Vermont, detailing suitable areas on the Conservation Area's south side for the nesting songbird forest management project. Bob Engel continues to collect

data on the presence of songbird species in the Conservation Area; this will serve as a baseline for future songbird habitat studies.

Old Business

A Marlboro resident to serve the remainder of Bob Anderson's term (through March 2013) has not yet been selected. A vacancy notice has been placed on the Town of Marlboro web site, but to date no responses have been received. Bob Engel volunteered to make personal contacts in an effort to fill the vacancy before the next Commission meeting.

The Commission tabled consideration of a change in its recommendation vis-à-vis funding of the 2012 Vermont Wildlife Festival for a future regular meeting TBD.

New Business

Patrick Johnson, organizer of the MES "Fire and Stone" component of its winter sports program, provided an overview of the program which will run for six afternoons in January and February. MES hopes to use Hogback as the main activity site. To that end, Patrick expressed the hope that the Commission would recommend to the Select Board that the Management Plan's prohibition of open campfires in the Conservation Area be amended in such a way as to allow the MES program to build warming fires as part of "Fire and Stone" outdoor experience.

Bob Engel moved that the Management Plan be amended to read as follows:

"Prohibited: Open campfires (except by special permission of the Hogback Preservation Commission)."

M/S/P 4-0.

The Commission will devise a Special Open Campfire Permit form which must be submitted to the Commission for its approval by any organization wishing to build a temporary warming and/or cooking fire in the Conservation Area. This special permit form must be submitted far enough in advance of an organized event to allow for the Commission to discuss and make a permitting decision at its Regular Meeting. Any controlled burning activity for forest management purposes must be approved by the Select Board and overseen by VLT's Stewardship Forester.

Discussion of the adoption of a Landowner Permission Form for mountain bike use of designated trails in the Conservation Area was tabled for consideration at the March meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 12th at 5 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hal Himmelstein, Chair