

**CANDIA CONSERVATION COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
APPROVED
MAY 26, 2005**

Present: Chairman Ed Fowler, Vice-Chair Betsy Kruse, and members T.Giffen, J.Miele, J.Collette, R.Snow, J.Lindsey, D.Levesque, D.Lewis, R.Weeks, and S.Carrigan. Guests included Phil Auger, Selectmen Gary York, Clarke Thyng, and Fred Kelley, and other Candia residents.

Chairman Fowler called the hearing to order at 7:03pm. In accordance with RSA 36-A:5(II), the purpose of the public hearing was to discuss the purchase of 82+- acres of land on Deerfield Road owned by Mary Girard. Commission Secretary Dawn Anne Higgins-Currie took roll call and an attendance sheet was passed around.

Chairman Fowler began the hearing with a power point presentation which supported the purpose of the purchase. He discussed 4 reasons to purchase the land:

1. The land is in a high priority area.
2. The land would be excellent for recreational use.
3. The land has excellent wildlife and forest management opportunities.
4. Open space pays!

Maps of the land showed the boundaries as well as the poorly drained soil and very poorly drained soil within those boundaries. Pictures showed a logging road that runs from east to west of the property. After the presentation, Chairman Fowler opened the floor for questions.

Rick Lazott was concerned that the land would continue to be used for recreational use. In the past, anti-hunters tend to close these areas to hunters. Mr. Fowler responded that it will be open to fishing, hiking, snow-shoeing, hunting, and wildlife/bird watching. The Commission has spoken with members of the ATV club about possible ATV use on town owned lands, but stated he was concerned about the damage that has occurred on other conservation lands in the town by ATV users. Another concern would be the lack of space to park vehicles along the property. Betsy Kruse stated that the commission has not ignored the fact that ATV owners would like access to town properties, it was the fact that someone would need to do the upkeep of the trail. Mr. Lazott suggested that a possible sticker, similar to what is used at the Recycling Center, could be used.

Kim Byrd asked if we asked the appraiser, Freneau Appraisals from Manchester, what the development rights were worth. Mr. Fowler explained that that is a separate appraisal which would cost more than the \$3000 spent. Mr. Byrd then questioned how this purchase fit into the overall plan of the CCC. Mr. Fowler explained that the goal is to protect large areas of unfragmented land and its natural resources. Mr. Byrd then

questioned the price of the land. Mr. Fowler responded with \$370,000 which figures out to be \$4500/acre.

Selectman Fred Kelley expressed concern about what he understood was stated at the town meeting regarding the commission coming back to the town for the residents to be able to vote on the purchase of land. Mr. Fowler read the town meeting minutes aloud which did not indicate that was said. He stated that he recalls saying that if land is under the protection of the CCC, it cannot be taken away until it goes back to the town meeting and is voted on. He apologized for any misunderstandings that occurred.

Charlie Bowman asked if an easement can be removed once it is in place. Mr. Fowler replied that the only way that it could be removed would be by a demonstrated public need through eminent domain. Fred Kelley then asked if the town needed the land could it be used. Mr. Fowler again stated that only if it was taken by eminent domain.

Suzy Nord asked for Mr. Fowler to explain the difference between a conservation easement and the land that was voted on at the town meeting. He explained that they are two separate issues. One is land that is under conservation management, and the other is land that is under conservation easement which is a legal binding document.

Rick Zang mentioned that this purchase should not have been a surprise as publications were sent to residents explaining why the commission was asking for the \$200,000 at town meeting. Mr. Fowler replied that three newsletters were sent out.

Kim Byrd stated that if the townspeople were not going to be allowed to vote on the purchase then could the meeting be adjourned. Dick Snow replied that the commission members will be the ones to vote on the purchase.

Ingrid Byrd questioned why the purchase of the property was not mentioned at the town meeting so that it could have been discussed there. Mr. Fowler replied that at that point in time the owner had not made a decision and felt that it was not appropriate. Mrs. Byrd stated that the citizens had a right to vote on a purchase with that amount of money involved. She felt that it was counterproductive and will not aide in future requests for money. Mr. Fowler responded that at town meeting the people voted to give the \$200,000 to purchase land when it came available. The land may not remain available if we had to wait until the next town meeting to vote. Sue Nord replied that she had questions regarding the amount of money being asked for, so she attended the conservation meeting and her questions were answered.

Mary Girard spoke on how she agreed to sell the land to the commission to preserve open space. She continued by saying she did not want a development, school, or anything of that nature built there. Selectman Clark Thyng thanked Mary, on behalf of the town, for the opportunity to purchase the land for Candia residents. Selectman Thyng then asked how this purchase would affect our taxes. Ed Fowler responded that the land was in current use and that approximately \$85 would be lost per year.

Scott Komisarek questioned if there were any other parcels of land that the CCC was currently looking into purchasing. Mr. Fowler replied that there were two others, but could not release the names at this point in time. One was for a bargain sale and the other was fee simple.

Paul Frazier asked if the land could be made available to everyone to use for bike trails, 4-wheelers, etc.? The residents could then make trails and do the upkeep on them. Dick Snow replied that the commission has a line on their agenda for each monthly meeting to discuss this. Town residents were welcome to come to the meetings to help create a management plan. Dennis Lewis replied that all options were open if the land were purchased by the commission.

Pat McLaughlin asked who would get the money from harvesting the timber. Mr. Fowler responded that the funds would go into maintaining conservation properties as well as for improvements.

7:55pm Chairman Ed Fowler closed the public hearing.

8:03pm Chairman Ed Fowler called the meeting of the CCC to order.

Betsy Kruse made a motion that the Conservation Commission authorized to spend up to \$370,000, from the Conservation fund, for the purchase of land designated as Map 401 Lot 1-1. J.Lindsey seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

The meeting was closed by a vote of the members at 8:10 PM.