

**Town of Auburn
Conservation Commission
September 4, 2018**

Members present: Jeff Porter-Chairman. Peg Donovan, Vice Chair. Diana Heaton, Alan Villeneuve, Members. Richard Burnham & Kayla Beliveau, Alternates.

Absent: Ed Fehrenbach, Member. Stephanie Hanson, Alternate.

Mr. Porter called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. and moved on to the only thing on the agenda with Mr. James Dowd.

NEW BUSINESS

**James Dowd
391 Pingree Hill Road, Tax Map 2, Lot 18-1
Zoned Rural
Discuss Potential Conservation Easement**

Mr. Porter turned the meeting over to Mr. Dowd and asked Mr. Dowd what he was interested in doing. Mr. Dowd began by saying that he had purchased this property about a year and a half ago which has about 25 acres of beautiful fields and another 35 acres of woods and stated that it was a gorgeous piece of property. Mr. Dowd understood that the previous owner wanted to put in cluster housing in there and that one of the reasons he purchased the property was that he did not want that to happen. Mr. Dowd mentioned that, he was before the Conservation Commission last year and that based on the conversation that took place with regard to possibly putting the property into a Conservation Easement and that he began to explore it a little more but that he still did not know much about it. Mrs. Donovan asked how many acres was he thinking of putting into a Conservation Easement. Mr. Dowd indicated that it was about 60 acres and that there was discussion about sectioning out parcels for his three (3) children and if they want to sometime in the future put a house on it then they could but that he would like to put pretty much all of it into a Conservation Easement. Mr. Dowd indicated that he has cut down some of the brush so that now people could see the field. Mrs. Donovan explained that he would take out the house area and enough acreage for his three (3) children. Mr. Dowd thought he only needed 200 feet of road frontage and 2 acres when in fact the requirement within the Rural zone is 300 feet of road frontage and 3 acres. Mr. Dowd informed the Board that he would need to rethink the idea of subdividing lots off for his children.

At this time, Mr. Porter began explaining the procedure and what would occur which was that they would begin by speaking with the South East Land Trust and see what interest they would have in preserving the parcel. Mr. Porter went on to say that they would also then look at what interest the Conservation Commission would have. They would then start by mapping out as to how it would be parceled off and to figure out what restrictions he would have if placed in a Conservation Easement as well as evaluate the value of the parcel. Mr. Porter informed Mr. Dowd that, if he was interested in moving forward with placing it into a Conservation Easement that he would contact Jeremy at SELT and see what his availability is to come in and talk to us about it and whether or not there is interest. A brief discussion ensued with regard to Conservation Easements within the Town of Auburn.

In conclusion, Mr. Porter informed Mr. Dowd that they would be looking at clear property line delineations, what parcels that he would be looking at segregating off for the family and then putting that in with the equation to see what the value would be with SELT if they're interested and also what the valuation is from the Conservation Commissions perspective and then go from there. There would be a legal team involved that would look at the language and there are some template easement documents. Mr. Porter indicated that, what Mr. Dowd would be looking for from his perspective and what he would be looking to secure from a Conservation perspective. Mr. Dowd did not want to wake up and see people walking around his land. Mrs. Donovan informed Mr. Dowd that he could post it because it was still his land and it would be in the deed but however, in the deed it would say that it was an easement. Discussion ensued with regard to language and posting the property and Ms. Heaton also added that it does not become public access property and believed that was what Mr. Dowd was worried about. Mr. Villeneuve commented that, the only thing that he has asked for in the past is that, if he did not want hunting on the property that he puts hunting by owner permission or something like that. Mr. Dowd did not like the idea of having hunting on the property because his kids are usually on the trails. Mr. Villeneuve did say that, it is hard for the town to pay for an easement to have no use by neighboring people but he could post it himself but could not have it written into his deed that there will not be any hunting.

Discussion ensued with regard to the property being located within the Rural zone and which the requirement was 3 acres and 300 feet of road frontage. The Board talked about the previous owner and how he wanted to subdivide the property and had some issues. Mr. Dowd again reiterated that he would have to rethink subdividing off lots for his kids. With that said, Mr. Porter asked Mr. Dowd that if he was interested in putting his land into a Conservation Easement to let him know and then he would get in touch with Jeremy at SELT and possibly schedule another set of meetings and figure out what the next step might be. Mr. Dowd stated that, he was interested in obtaining more information. Mr. Villeneuve informed Mr. Dowd that it does take a while for the whole process. Mr. Dowd stated that he was in no rush.

Mr. Dowd thanked the Board for their time and exited the meeting.

MINUTES

Mrs. Donovan moved to approve the meeting minutes of August 7, 2018. Ms. Heaton seconded the motion. All were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Porter wanted to talk to the Board about the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and asked the Board members if they had any conceptual ideas on whether or not they would want to entertain going into a CIP program for getting additional funds from the town to do more conservation programs that would require more funds from the town to expend such as mapping programs or anything that may be of interest to anybody. Ms. Heaton mentioned educational programing makes sense even if it's just an outreach for even easements. There are a lot of ways that people can learn about wetlands that hopefully would make them see that there is something other than an impediment then putting up a swimming pool. Mr. Villeneuve believed that would be just a budget item. Discussion ensued with regard to CIP items.

Finally, Mr. Porter suggested that the Board members think of ideas so that they could start brainstorming ideas together. The Board talked about areas within the Town of Auburn that could possibly be available to be placed in a Conservation Easement.

Mrs. Donovan also mentioned protecting water resources and possibly putting it into a line item. Mr. Porter informed the Board members that the Planning Board was in the process of putting something in place for water protection resources.

Mr. Porter also informed the Board members what had occurred at the Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting that took place on August 28th and informed the Board that the request for a garage passed and the pool on Bunker Hill Road passed as well.

Mr. Villeneuve talked about the school project with the Board members with regard to the wetland crossing, the archeological dig that was taking place, the ballfield and the wetland delineation.

ADJOURN

Mr. Villeneuve moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Burnham seconded the motion. All were in favor, the motion passed unanimously and the meeting stood adjourned at 8.06 p.m.

The next Conservation Commission meeting is currently scheduled for Tuesday, October 2, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, 47 Chester Road unless otherwise noted.