

Notes from the Milton CC Casey Road Land Protection Sub-committee Meeting

Monday, July 25, 2017 at 5:30 pm in the Emma Ramsey Center

Present: Cynthia Wyatt, Karen Golab, and Virginia Long

5:40 start meeting

No minutes to approve

Cynthia and Virginia reported on their meeting with the Stewardship and Lands Committee meeting of Moose Mountains Regional Greenways (on 7/17/2017) to discuss MMRG taking on the Casey Rd easement:

Cynthia said that the S/L Comm asked about the Town's goals in placing an easement. They seemed generally favorable to taking on the project. They said that including the defunct subdivision and the other Town land adjacent to the Casey Road property would make the project more desirable and would be more cost efficient to accomplish all together than to add those later. (Karen interjected that previously they informed the Town Forest Committee that it wasn't a big deal.) They also said that they would expect more financial contribution from the Town than the \$10k already promised by the MCC (total expected budget of \$30-35k). Virginia added that the S/C Comm suggested the Town start trying to raise enthusiasm for the project, by holding a walk or similar event.

Cynthia reported that she inquired of Attorney Margaret Byrnes about the legal requirements to dedicate town land acquired by tax deed into public use. Atty Byrnes said RSA 80:80(5) requires that land acquired by tax deed must have a town vote in order to be put into public use rather than be sold. (This contradicts what MMRG asserted at the meeting.)

Cynthia also asked Atty Byrnes about the legalities of owning both the land in fee and the conservation easement of a parcel; waiting for response (received).

Karen reported that Kathy Wallingford (Town Assessor's Clerk) is working on reaching out to the landowners around the tax acquired land abutting the Casey Rd property to ask them to release their interest in that parcel so the Town can place an easement on it. Cynthia suggested that to move that process along, the MCC could pay Town Atty Jim Sessler to accomplish it, rather than expecting the money to come from Town funds. There was discussion of how else to move the process along and the need to approach the Milton BOS to ask to make it a priority. Consensus was to first speak to Selectman Andy Rawson about it. Notably, the release needs to happen before there can be a warrant article for townspeople to approve the easement.

Cynthia reported that she asked Milton Fire Chief Nick Marique about helping to remove the two structures on the Casey Rd property and he said he could get some volunteer (?) help to do so, if we could provide equipment such as dumpster, which costs about \$750. Cynthia said Branch Hill Farm (BHF)

can donate a bucket loader and driver. Karen mentioned that Charlie Ek gave an estimate of weight of building materials that make it less costly to simply use a dump truck and Cynthia said BHF could also provide that. Cynthia pointed out that we need the support of the Milton BOS to get this done and so we should approach Andy about this as well. Virginia commented that we can remind them that the existing structures constitute a liability to the Town, which should also motivate then BOS to prioritize taking them down.

We discussed the defunct sub-division abutting the Casey Rd property that we want to include in the easement held by MMRG. Since the defunct sub-division already has an easement on it, that easement will need to be consistent with the new one, or the new one that replaces it can be made more restrictive. We decided as a Committee to review the existing easement to see if it is satisfactory in general for that purpose. Karen will also forward the easement to Andy for him to review.

We discussed the need for more money for the project. Cynthia said she would ask Steve if the MCC Conservation Fund has enough money to give \$20k or \$25k instead of the \$10k previously pledged. Virginia commented that if the property has a true educational purpose involving school children visits, then that would make grant funding much more likely. Virginia agreed to talk to the Milton School Superintendent about the prospects for school use and what parking requirements there would be.

Cynthia commented that we need more non-MMRG people on this committee and we resolved to get Andy Rawson more involved and to ask Wayne Sylvester if he would also serve on it.

Karen commented that the fish species inventory on Lyman Brook was anti-climactic (no valuable fish species found, some species identified had probably been illegally stocked in ponds upstream)

Karen suggested that we hold a public meeting and invite abutters, many of whom didn't attend the meeting a few years ago at which the survey was taken. This committee could report on what the Town Forest Committee and this Committee has accomplished in the intervening time and raise enthusiasm for the project. Virginia suggested that we combine that kind of meeting with a walk to get people out on the property. Karen suggested we have a name-the-trail contest. Virginia said she would start looking into it, such as asking Charlie Ek to lead a walk. Cynthia suggested calling it a trail party and added we need to get BOS support for it. She expects they would be enthusiastic.

The committee decided on a tentative next meeting date of Aug 28 (since changed).

These notes are to the best of my memory. Please accept my best intent and feel free to make revisions!

Respectfully submitted by Virginia