

Approved _____, 2017

Cornwall Planning Commission (CPC)

Cornwall Town Hall

May 17, 2017 • 6:00–7:36pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Holly Noordsy, Jamie McKenna, Jean Terwilliger, Bobbie Carnwath, Jim Duclos

ALSO PRESENT: Eric Mortensen, Mary Dodge, Al Calzini, Connor Stinson

CALL TO ORDER: 7:05pm

QUORUM: Established.

AGENDA: Holly requested the Agenda be amended to include Connor under Announcements. Holly MOVED, Jean SECONDED, that the Agenda be approved, with the amendment as noted *Motion passed* – (4 in favor, 0 opposed).

1. MINUTES

- ***February 22, special meeting:***

Jean MOVED, Jamie SECONDED, that the **Minutes of February 22** be approved. *Motion passed* (3 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions [Bobbie, Jim not members at that time]).

- ***April 10, regular meeting:*** Jean MOVED, Jim SECONDED, that the **Minutes of April 10** be approved. *Motion passed* (5 in favor, 0 opposed)

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- ***VLCT Spring Planning Workshop***—June 11.
- ***Energy Grant***—See Old Business
- ***Connor Stinson***—Connor introduced himself and explained his ties to the Town and his interest in joining the PC. Holly explained the development of the DRB and how it has benefitted the functioning of the PC.

3. NEW BUSINESS:

- ***Douglas Pond***—[Mary] Holly noted that the PC is not competing for this grant, so there is no conflict in that regard. She also noted that she had conferred with Ben marks as to the extent of the support required by the grantor, an issue the SB had grappled with as well. Ben indicated he had confirmed that the support is for planning, not developing. She then distributed copies of the three letters from the three Douglas Pond abutting property owners.

Mary described the grant being sought and how it matches the needs and goals of the Trails group. She explained how the several sub-groups evolved, each around a specific goal. The Pond group is particularly interested in this grant because it provides technical assistance with a focus on water issues, something the group anticipates will consume a large portion of their planning efforts. No money is involved, just advise and assistance in planning how to deal with the water issues. The group has received oral support, but written support is proving more difficult.

Eric—Expressed “cautious enthusiasm” and noted the main issues he has concerns with: that the woodland area west of the Pond remain undisturbed; that undesirable activities

in the parking area be mitigated (close at dusk? who monitors?); that the area remain peaceful and the project kept small-scale. He also noted that the Pond is rapidly filling in and much has already become just a wetland rather than a pond. The expense of dredging makes it likely that within a short span of years the Pond—as a pond— may not be there at all. He questioned who will supervise the area to keep it from becoming an “attractive nuisance”. Additionally, he mentioned that as a designated wetland, development of paths or trails may not be permitted.

Al ’s primary issue centers on the proximity of the proposed parking area to his house and children, as well as the harmful effects on his water supply of dredging, herbicides, and other efforts to “clean up” the pond—his well already suffers at times. He foresees teen parties, drugs, other illicit behaviors such as tend to occur at other parking access lots. He also enjoys the peace and relative seclusion there, even though on the road, and fears the potential influx of traffic.

Both men noted that although they love the pond area, it is rapidly becoming a swamp.

A discussion then ensued regarding the possible increased use by Town residents, and the educational uses of the area, which the school already takes advantage of.

The PC then determined that they feel it is worth exploring the potentials, but will not commit to supporting a final project, only the initial planning phase. Jamie will write the letter.

- **Landworks**—A public workshop is to be held may 31, hosted by Landworks. The purpose is to introduce planning tools and concepts to the community, and to begin the communication process essential to the crafting of the revised by-laws. Landworks has created a poster to distribute; other possibilities for spreading the word include the newsletter, Front Porch Forum, Facebook, Town website, etc. Landworks will present the results of the workshop to the PC in June. The PC reviewed and discussed the plan for the workshop, noting several items to feed back to Landworks prior to finalizing the program’s agenda.

4. OLD BUSINESS:

- **Covered Bridge**—Nothing new to report
- **Energy Working Group Update**—Bobbie advised that Cornwall had not been selected as one of the three towns for the grant for the ARCP program.
- **Trails Update**—Bobbie attended and reported that there were about 20 people at the meeting. The group will focus on the possibilities for use of Class 4 roads.
- **The Park**—Jamie and Holly will be meeting with Sue J. and Landworks next Tuesday to review plans that had been made, then put on hold during the Town Hall renovation.

ADJOURNMENT: Jim MOVED, Jean SECONDED, that the meeting be adjourned, 9:25pm..

Motion passed (5in favor, 0 opposed)

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Conway, Substitute Minute-Taker

To: Members of Cornwall Selectboard,
Members of Cornwall Planning Commission.

From: Abi and Bill Sessions, 75 Douglas Rd, Cornwall VT

Re: Development of the town's Douglas Pond property for light recreational use

Date: May 14, 2017

We are abutting landowners to the Town's Douglas Pond Property, sharing a boundary on the north side of the Town's land.

We enthusiastically support the effort to create facilities for light recreational use of the Douglas Pond site. Such facilities might include walking trails, wildlife viewing stations, benches, descriptive plaques, perhaps small installations with poetry (such as on the Robert Frost Trail in Ripton).

In addition, we support creation of the infrastructure to support such activity, such as a small parking area on the town's land and perhaps portable toilet facilities.

If necessary we would be amenable to having some of the trails traverse our property near the boundary with the Town's land.

Our only reservation is that wildlife not be unduly disturbed and Douglas Pond not be treated with nonorganic materials.

We hope the Selectboard and Planning Commission can give their enthusiastic support to begin the planning process for such development.

Abi and Bill Sessions

Eric and Roma Mortensen
314 Douglas Road
Cornwall, VT 05753

May 14, 2017

My wife and I have read your proposal for limited development of the Douglas Pond area with cautious enthusiasm. The concept seems to be well thought out and the "brainstorming" session of the Trails Meeting anticipates many of our concerns. As abutting land owners we do have some recommendations we would like to add.

-We believe that trails down to the pond should be through the eastern part of the woods off Douglas Road. The woods on the western side of the pond should remain undisturbed because of wild life that frequents it. It is a safe environment. We frequently observe deer, rabbits, turkeys, geese, fox, and an occasional bobcat wandering out on to our fields. They are an important part of the peacefulness of our property.

-The scale of the development should remain small and quiet. A natural concern would be partying, trash or vandalism. We would recommend some benches, but not picnic tables. It should also be closed after dark.

-We are assuming that any issues of landowner liability will be addressed before approval.

With proper planning, this will be an addition to our community and not become a nuisance or aggravation.

Yours truly,



Roma Mortensen

Eric and Roma Mortensen

Town of Cornwall Selectboard,

I am writing to let you know of my thoughts on the proposal to develop Douglas Pond as a recreational area. I read through the Conservation Committee report and I have several concerns. First, there are no shortage of recreational opportunities in our area. I see no need to develop this wetland area further. The area is already open to exploration and the pond is enjoyed by many townspeople in various seasons. Living here I can attest to the significant wildlife corridor in and around the pond. I would hate to disrupt that with further development and human traffic. In the report, there was discussion of trails, dredging and water quality. It seems like an awful lot for a one acre pond and six acres of wetland and scrub brush. I am also concerned about my well water quality. My well and house are nearly on top of the pond and what happens to the pond would affect my well.

I am also very concerned about the type of activities that take place at recreation area parking lots and pull offs. Go by the Swamp Rd parking lot and look around the ground to see what type of activities are popular there. When I go fishing with my kids there we see alcohol containers, drug paraphernalia, all kinds of trash, household appliances, and televisions dumped. We even had a homicide victim's car burned and an extensive search for the body take place at that location. Recreation parking lots are a magnet for smash and grab crimes and other illegal activity. I don't want that literally in my backyard.

Lastly, I would not have moved here if I thought the town was going to develop the Douglas Pond area into a recreation destination. I have a small piece of property and it is a quiet neighborhood and that is the reason I chose to move here. For all these reasons I do not support the town seeking grant money to develop the Douglas Pond area for recreation. In fact, I will actively oppose any plan to develop this wild area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Albert Calzini". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a stylized "C".

Al Calzini
224 Douglas Rd
Cornwall, VT