

Danby Conservation Advisory Council

minutes
March 26, 2012

Members Present: Joel Gagnon (chair), Dan Klein, and Jake Brenner

Members Absent: Tom Gavin

Others Present: Mary Woodsen

Minutes of the February 27 meeting were approved.

Who pays for what? There was a discussion of this topic, but no action. At the time of the discussion, Jake had not yet arrived, so there was no quorum for action. Joel and Dan both agree that the taxpayers should not have to pay for acquiring and monitoring conservation easements. Both also agree that the landowners should bear most of the costs of easement creation, and that these should be minimized. Dan suggested that funds be raised to enable the CAC to contribute to the costs for those who might need it. The issue needs to be revisited for formal action.

Record keeping. Joel reported on a constructive dialog among himself, Pamela Goddard (Town Clerk and records officer for the town), and Guy Krogh (Town Attorney and pro-bono advisor to the CAC) regarding whether the CAC is covered by the open meetings law. Guy told the CAC at the February meeting that we are not; Pamela Goddard thought we were. The CAC has committed to being generally open. The point of contention is mostly communications, especially email communications, outside of meetings. These are a part of the record of the group's activity and are FOILable if the group is subject to the open meetings law, but not if it is not. More on this subject is likely to come up, but no action was taken at this meeting.

CAC membership expansion Mary Woodsen attended this meeting at Dan's invitation to get a feeling for the group and what it is about. She may apply to be appointed. Dan and Joel talked about possible outreach to others to gauge interest; Joel will contact at least one prospect before the next meeting.

Developing a template for a "plain vanilla easement" Jake arrived at this point, just in time to enable a focus on how to put together a simple easement document that can serve as a template for most of our easements. We considered the virtues of the menu of sample easements provided to us by Guy Krogh and settled on using the first one (labeled "sample complex conservation easement") as the basis for our picking and choosing what to include in our simple easement, since it was the most comprehensive and has just about anything we might want to include. We got into it a few pages. To facilitate the process at the next meeting, we agreed to closely review that sample easement prior to the meeting and highlight what we would like to include and exclude.

submitted by Joel Gagnon