

COOS COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
Lancaster, NH  
July 5, 2011

Present from the Board: John Scarinza – Chair; Fred King – Vice Chair; Sue Collins – Clerk; Commissioner Burnham “Bing” Judd, Rep. Robert Théberge, Jonathan Frizzell, Mike Waddell, Ed Mellett, alternate Scott Rineer.

Present from the Public: David Douglass, Thaddeus Thorne Surveys, Inc.; Kevin Evans, Forester for Dartmouth College Trustees; Edith Tucker, *Coös County Democrat/Berlin Reporter* and members of the public.

John Scarinza, Chair, opened the regular meeting of the Board at 5:30 PM. John noted that alternate Scott Rineer would be a voting member of the Board for this meeting filling Rick Tillotson’s seat.

**MINUTES OF MAY 26, 2011:**

Bing Judd made a motion to approve the minutes of May 26<sup>th</sup> as distributed. Fred King seconded the motion. With no comments, the Chairman called for a vote to accept the minutes and all voted in favor of approval.

**LETTERS/CORRESPONDENCE TO THE BOARD:**

- Sue Collins stated that Pip Decker, Brookfield Power had extended an invitation to the Board members to tour the Granite Reliable Wind Park construction site on July 19, 20 or 21. Commissioner Judd stated that he had visited the site the previous week and advised that Board members should delay a site visit until GRP is further along in construction as conditions are rugged. Ed Mellett agreed and stated that the site visit should be put off until August when more work is completed. Sue stated she would contact Pip and arrange for some mutually convenient August dates.
- The Appalachian Mountain Club returned its building permit after work was completed on the Madison Spring Hut in Low & Burbank’s Grant. Accompanying the letter was a press release and pictures of the renovations. Copies of the letter with attachments had been provided to Board members in advance of the meeting.
- On June 14, David Douglass, Surveyor with Thaddeus Thorne Surveys, Inc. of Center Conway had notified the Board by letter that the buyer of The Balsams had decided to take title to the disposal areas involving two of the pending subdivision applications. Applications were withdrawn for the so-called stump dump and so-called rubber dump sites as well as the ash disposal area site. Mr. Douglass had noted in his letter that the applications had served a purpose and brought attention to the disposal areas. Testing and monitoring will continue under the guidance of the NH Department of Environmental Services.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### Dixville – Tillotson Corporation Subdivision Applications:

##### Application #1 withdrawn:

- 5.96 acre parcel that is the existing ash dump for the biomass plant that is not planned to be conveyed in the sale of The Balsams; and

##### Application #2 withdrawn:

- 7.02 acre parcel is a closed disposal area with a ground water management zone and is not being conveyed with the sale of The Balsams; and
- Another 16.08 acre parcel is created by the existing Barn Road that serves as access to land in Colebrook and the parcel presently serves as a garage and maintenance depot.

Chairman Scarinza asked Surveyor David Douglass to present updated information regarding Applications 3 and 4. The purpose of the presentation and discussion was to determine if the applications were complete. Board member Jonathan Frizzell recused himself from participation in the discussion. Sue Collins stated that payment would be billed after advertising and abutter notification costs had been determined. Mr. Douglass stated that he would see to it that all costs were paid by the owner.

Mr. Douglass stated that he was presenting each plan in two versions. One version will contain all the information required for filing with the Registry of Deeds and another plan prepared for the Board includes the soils and slopes data (making them very busy with the amount of detail for these large parcels). His understanding was the purpose of this presentation was to ascertain that the applications were complete and then abutters would be notified of a Public Hearing before the Board could take action on the applications. The Chairman confirmed that Mr. Douglass' understanding was correct.

Mr. Douglass proceeded to present the plan for a 3-lot subdivision labeled **Application #4** which includes a 5 acre parcel that is the home of Thomas and Debra Tillotson and is not part of the parcel being conveyed with the sale of The Balsams; and a 187.6 acre parcel that includes the wind generation sites currently under construction by Granite Reliable Wind Park and is not part of the parcel being conveyed with the sale of The Balsams.

Mr. Douglass noted that the 5 acre Thomas/Debra Tillotson parcel was surveyed several years ago by York Land Services. The plan shows the road access and right of way to Route 26. The second part of the plan is the Dixville Peak ridge where two of the wind turbines will be erected by GRP this year. The plan shows access to the ridge via Hodge Valley Road which is not drive-able and it never would meet the 10% grade standard. He expects that GRP will use only the new access road that they are currently building.

Mr. Douglass stated that he is requesting a waiver of

- test pits;
- identification of wetlands per Corp of Engineer guidelines; and
- scale of 1" to 100'.

Commissioner Judd noted that if the ridge is used in the future for additional wind turbines, the developer will need to produce Army Corp data.

Commissioner Judd made a motion to accept Application #4 as complete with the requested waivers granted. Fred King seconded the motion.

Representative Th  berge asked about the waiver for test pits. It was explained that test pits are only need for septic and no septic was envisioned for the ridge line parcel.

There being no further discussion, the Chairman called for a vote on Commissioner Judd's motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Douglass presented the new plans for **Application #3**, a 69.26 acre parcel being separated out and being retained as a future wind generation site and is not to be conveyed with the sale of The Balsams. This parcel is Sanguinary Ridge.

Once again Mr. Douglass provided 2 sets of prints – one with soils and slopes and one for recording. He noted that the ridge has a road you can drive on and there is a right of way indicated on the subdivision plan. No test pits are required as no septic system will be located there. Mr. Douglass requested a waiver on the

- scale of 1" to 100';
- test pits; and
- identification of wetlands per Corp of Engineers guidelines.

Fred King made a motion to accept Application #3 as complete with the waivers. Commissioner Judd seconded the motion.

Fred King noted that Board members expressed concern at the last meeting about who would own the disposal sites if Tillotson Corporation dissolved. He wondered who would own the two ridge line sites when Tillotson Corporation is dissolved. John Scarinza asked if the Corporation is retaining these ridgeline parcels. Mr. Douglass replied that you can't sell dump sites but you can sell wind sites.

Mr. Douglass explained that the NH Department of Environmental Services had allowed disposal site monitoring on the stump/rubber to slide. Representative Th  berge stated that the DES Commissioner has assured him that the Department will now monitor these sites.

There being no further discussion on Mr. King's motion to accept Application #3, the Chairman called for a vote. All voted in favor.

It was agreed that a Public Hearing will be held at 6:30 PM on August 2<sup>nd</sup> at a location to be determined in the Colebrook/Dixville area.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Jonathan Frizzell resumed his seat on the Board.

Election of Officers:

- **Chairman:** Mike Waddell nominated John Scarinza; Sue Collins seconded the motion. No other nominations were made.
- **Vice-Chair:** Bing Judd nominated Fred King; Jonathan Frizzell seconded the motion. No other nominations were made.
- **Clerk:** Fred King nominated Sue Collins; Ed Mellett seconded the motion. No other nominations were made.

All voted in favor of the slate of officers for the coming year.

### **BUILDING PERMITS:**

Sue Collins explained that Building Permit #360 that the Board had approved for Granite Reliable Power on April 13, 2011 was listed on the agenda simply to note that #360 had been assigned to the MET tower building permit.

Commissioner Judd made a motion to ratify the following permits issued by the Clerk since the last meeting. Mike Waddell seconded the motion.

- #361: **Odell:** Mark & Gail Yourison – New pitched roof on 17' x 7' shed;
- #362: **Millsfield:** Manuel Franco – 4' x 6' addition to existing building;
- #363: **Millsfield:** Ronald Baillargeon – 3' x 4' outhouse; and
- #364: **Millsfield:** Ronald Baillargeon – 12' x 12' storage shed.

Sue Collins requested to add Permit #365 issued on June 29 after the agendas had been mailed.

#365: **Odell:** Susan Clark – 4' x 8' addition to existing building.

Sue Collins explained that all permit applications were submitted with all required components and met the building permit requirements.

The Chairman called for a vote and all voted in favor of Commissioner Judd's motion.

Chairman Scarinza recognized Kevin Evans, Forester for the Trustees of Dartmouth College – Second College Grant. Mr. Evans had recently submitted a building permit application for a 28' x 24' cabin. Mr. Evans explained that the site for the cabin had purposely been kept out of a PD-3 (Critical Wildlife Habitat) zone. He explained that an

old building at an adjacent site will be torn down and the debris will be taken to the Mt. Carberry Landfill. This new cabin, referred to as the Town Office, will be a more modern facility that will meet the owners' present needs.

Commissioner Judd made a motion to approve the building permit application of the Trustees of Dartmouth College for a 28' 24' cabin. Fred King seconded the motion. With no discussion or questions forthcoming the Chairman called for a vote and all members voted in favor of issuing a building permit (#366).

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Fred King noted recent articles in the newspapers about more Plum Creek lands in Wentworth Location being conveyed to the federal government to be protected by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. He stated that he remains opposed to more and more federal ownership in the unincorporated places. Mike Waddell stated that this parcel would have been ideal for a county forest. Ed Mellett stated that Phase I of the Androscoggin Headwaters Conservation Project was completed with the land that was recently transferred. The Phase II lands (4,532 acres) were slated to be transferred this year but a delay has occurred due to lack of federal funds to complete the purchase. The Phase II lands are being eyed as another addition to the Umbagog Wildlife Refuge. Phase III (10,208 acres) is slated for a forest legacy conservation easement and Phase V (938 acres) which includes the Greenough Ponds would be purchased by the State of NH Fish & Game. Ed wondered where the State would get the money for the purchase.

Sue Collins stated that after their meeting on June 15<sup>th</sup>, the County Commissioners wrote to Congressman Charlie Bass and Senators Kelly Ayotte and Jeanne Shaheen requesting a 4-year moratorium of any further purchase of lands in the unincorporated places for federal ownership. John Scarinza stated that he heard from Senator Shaheen's staff member Chuck Henderson who stated he is interested in exploring the county forest concept with the Planning Board and Commissioners. John said that he would like to get together with county staff in September to map out the larger land holdings in the unincorporated places to see if any of these lands would make sense for a county forest keeping in mind the concept of willing buyer/willing seller. Fred King stated that if the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) steps in with the funds to purchase the Phase II lands in anticipation of future federal ownership, they should be told that their funds are at higher risk due to the letters sent by the County Commissioners to the members of New Hampshire's Congressional Delegation.

Fred King stated that a representative of the White Mountain National Forest had reported to the County Commissioners at their June meeting that only 1-2% of timber is cut annually. Fred noted that the WMNF is hardly doing the timber industry any favors with this limited harvesting.

Mike Waddell noted that the Umbagog Wildlife Refuge has no boundaries like the WMNF and they can expand forever. The Refuge was initially supported locally with its

limited area. Fred King added that it is large enough now to continue its benefit to Errol, the local economy and wildlife.

Representative Th  berge said that he supports the county forest concept. He noted though that in Congress, the number of acres purchased in New Hampshire for federal purposed is tiny compared to the big land acquisitions and holdings in the West.

John Scarinza explained that the Planning Board is in a good position to lay out a foundation for the future of the unincorporated places but he fears taking a public stand on one type of development over another. The Board needs to be impartial when it considers subdivision applications.

Jonathan Frizzell advised that the Board needs to defer to the Master Plan – we must support it, not step out of that arena and stay neutral. John Scarinza added that as a result of future discussions the Master Plan can be changed. Jonathan added that input from the general public has to be considered when revisions are made to the Master Plan.

Mike Waddell quoted the Master Plan statement that traditional ownership is encouraged. As far as the Refuge is concerned, scale does matter and it begins to do harm to the whole if it gets too large. The Board can raise objections to more federal ownership and its accompanying restrictions. Scott Rineer stated that the Refuge has actually posted some of its lands closed to berry picking.

John Scarinza stated that the Master Plan is general on the concepts of maintaining the traditional timber base and we might need to change it to state that for the good of the economy, we do not support changes in use. Mike Waddell stated that with a county forest, it is local citizens who make the decisions on stewardship of the land and whether to cut or not to cut.

Ed Mellett talked about the WMNF 10-year plan which indicates what timber can be cut. They then cut that amount in half, and then they only have the funding to cut half of that half! Mike Waddell stated that WMNF staff has become very sensitive to where they will cut.

Jonathan Frizzell stated that the Board needs more statistics on ownership patterns over time and the number of acres that have been removed from the lands available for timber harvesting. John Scarinza stated that during the recent past, many lands have had conservation easements placed on them. Mike Waddell added that this whole discussion is more than trees; it is the free public use of privately owned lands that continues to be important.

Discussion continued on whether the Board of Commissioners should appoint a task force to work on these issues in greater detail.

**HEARING OF THE PUBLIC:**

No comments were forthcoming from the public.

**TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

As noted earlier, the next meeting of the Board will be held on August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 PM.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Fred King made a motion to adjourn. Scott Rineer seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne L. Collins, Clerk