

Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission

Minutes

Wednesday January 25, 2012

Location: Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG), Auburn, Maine

Time: Meeting began at 3:30 PM

Commissioners Present: Bruce Rioux, Dave Jones, Bethel Shields, Dick Thibodeau, John Butler, Joe Grube, Bob Thompson

Commissioners Absent: Steve French, John Bonneau

Others Present:

Kevin Gagne, Richard Burnham, John Storer, Sid Hazelton, K.C. Geiger, Tizz Crowley, Heather Hunter, Eric Cousens, Bob Cavanaugh

Commissioner Grube called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM

Agenda Item 1: Welcome new City of Lewiston representative, Councilor John Butler (replaces Ron Jean)

Mr. Butler, who was recently elected to the Lewiston City Council, was introduced and welcomed to the Commission. Mr. Butler stated that water quality is important to him, and he is looking forward to doing what he can to keep the watershed protection efforts going.

Agenda Item 2: Approve minutes of Regular Meeting of November 1, 2011

Vote 1– Motion by Commissioner Thompson and seconded by Commissioner Shields to accept the minutes of November 1, 2011, and place on file.

Passed 6 – 0 (Commissioner Butler abstaining)

Agenda Item 3: Finalize meeting dates for 2012 (only other scheduled meeting is Wed, March 28, 2012)

John Storer presented a 2012 calendar to help establish meeting dates in 2012. It was decided to meet every 2 months on the fourth Wednesday at 3:30PM. The following meeting dates were set:

March 28

May 23

July 25

Sept 26

November 28

December 5 - this date was set as a placeholder for budget approval

Vote 2– Motion by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Shields to set the LAWPC meeting dates for 2012

Passed 7 – 0

Agenda Item 4: Quarterly Financial Update – Heather Hunter

Heather Hunter presented the quarterly financial update, and highlighted the following:

- LAWPC operates on a calendar year budget, so the printout represents the year end totals. Auburn’s last quarter billing was not included in the total.
- An audit will be scheduled upon completion of the year-end financials
- Under expenditures, the forestry exceeded the budget; however, this was offset by the additional sale of timber under revenues.
- Water withdrawal revenues were less than anticipated
- Under capital expenditures, there was \$4,500 targeted for the installation of a dry hydrant. That money will be carried over to 2012.
- The public education line item was under expended. The remaining balance will be used for website development.
- For 2012, the Insurances line item has increased by 15% due to additional properties acquired.

- The Audit and Financial Services request has increased due to new auditing regulations that must be complied with.

Vote 3– Motion by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Thibodeau to accept the quarterly Financial Update.

Passed 7- 0

Agenda Item 5: Water Quality Update & Activity Report – Sid Hazelton

- LAWPC property off the Northerly section of Spring Road is targeted for timber harvest. The Forester has blazed the property boundaries, the trees have been marked, and abutters have been notified by mail of the proposed activity. The letter outlined that we are focused on removing low quality, damaged and diseased trees, and that our objective is to practice responsible forest management maintaining high water quality and wildlife habitat utilizing sustainable forestry. Lewiston Water Division employees will utilize the skid trail the forester creates for access to repair an eroded drainage channel that runs through the harvest area. A \$10,000 grant from the Maine Drinking Water Program will be used to partially fund this effort. Activity will begin once the ground has adequately frozen to support the harvest equipment.
- While marking trees for harvest, our Forester noted significant brush dumping on LAWPC property from an abutter. We will follow up with a site visit and letter.
- A private timber harvest is being proposed on Quail Run Road. Plans have been submitted, and are under review.
- Lake Auburn was completely frozen over for the first time on January 14.
- Staff will be collecting total phosphorus and dissolved oxygen data from the deep hole area on the lake if the ice gets thick enough to be safe to walk on. Bates College will be collecting data as well. Although this work is not mandated, the CEI watershed plan recommended that we do winter sampling. Given the presence of the algae Gleotrichia in the lake last summer, this background data may be useful.
- We had been pursuing a \$10,000 grant to update our Forestry Management Plan through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. As it turns out, this grant is reserved for private landowners. We are now pursuing a similar grant through the USDA Project Canopy. This is a 50/50 grant, and the match can come from “in kind” services.

Agenda Item 6: Open Session – Public Comments

Commissioner Thibodeau noted that the Department of Conservation met recently and decided to open Little Wilson Pond for ice fishing on a trial basis. This issue has been controversial due to lack of public access to the pond. John Storer reminded the Commission that this topic was addressed in the past, and that no action was taken regarding the request due to the fact the ice fishing is already allowed on the Basin, which is a direct tributary to Lake Auburn.

Agenda Item 7: New Business

- **Potential Land Swap – Gracelawn Road (continuation of efforts that date back to 2004 – see attached packet)**

John Storer was recently approached by Mike Gotto from Stoneybrook Consultants representing Get Er Done Associates LLC (GED) to revisit a land swap arrangement that was originally considered in 2004. At that time, a transfer in ownership of the gravel pit from Kurt Youland to George Schott and Clay McLafferty left the proposal in limbo. The land swap would transfer ownership of GED's shorefront land to LAWPC, enabling LAWPC to construct a recreational trail along the lake. GED would gain mining rights.

John and Dave Jones recently met with Norm Lamie to re-visit the original proposal. Norm had been the lead person that presented information to the Commission in 2004.

Some of the considerations of the proposal include the relocation of CMP lines, the maintenance of a 320 foot contour for construction of the trail, establishing excavation limits, acquisition of an adjacent CMCC parcel, remediation of the pit including the installation of gravel base for the path, and consideration for equitable value of the swap.

Some of the questions raised were: What would happen if GED sold the pit, or the corporation goes belly up? Will the groundwater be checked for contaminants? A concern was raised to maintain a 10' vertical separation from the excavation to seasonal groundwater as opposed to 2'.

Given the complexity of the issues, there is much work to be done before a recommendation can be made to the Commission. It was mentioned that any memo or agreement that was signed in 2004 is now void, and we are essentially starting from scratch. The Commission agreed to let John Storer and Dave Jones further investigate the land swap arrangement and report progress at future meetings.

- **Public Education & Outreach – need ideas for 2012**

The commission brainstormed ideas for increasing public awareness of watershed protection efforts. The 2012 budget includes \$1,000 to update the website as recommended in the CEI watershed report. The budget also includes \$7,500 for an educational brochure.

Ideas included:

- ✓ Getting information on the gull management program to the public
- ✓ Inviting watershed residents to a BBQ; hand out flyers and other information
- ✓ Utilize the L/A magazine
- ✓ Contact Peter Steele – Twin City Times
- ✓ Use tax bills or utility bills to include educational material
- ✓ Outreach to watershed communities outside L/A; set up a booth at town meetings
- ✓ Utilize the Community College to produce a video
- ✓ Piggyback on the Cities MS4 reporting

This topic will be on the agenda for future meetings.

Agenda Item 8: Old Business

The Dr. James property has been purchased by the Commission. It includes approximately nine acres, and includes the waterfront parcel, and a back lot across from the Spring Road.

Agenda Item 9: Adjourn Meeting

Vote 4 - Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Shields, and seconded by Commissioner Jones to adjourn the meeting.

Passed 7 - 0

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 PM

A true record, Attest:

Robert Thompson,
Secretary of the LAWPC