

# BROOKLINE PLANNING COMMISSION

## Minutes

November 13, 2019 – Brookline Town Office

Present: Tom Kavet, Barbara Bourne, Charlie Ezequelle, Daniel Dobson

Guests: Green Mountain Conservancy represented by Deborah Lee Luskin and Samuel Farwell

Members of the Public: None

- Meeting called to Order 7:05 PM
- No Minutes to approve from meeting of August 14, 2019
- Presentation by Deborah Lee Luskin and Samuel Farwell, Green Mountain Conservancy, regarding Deer Run Nature Preserve, with Discussion and Q&A

Green Mountain Conservancy (GMC) presented its efforts to conserve 636 acres of undeveloped forested land in Brookline and Newfane on the east side of the West River. This block of land, titled Phase II by the Conservancy, is in the West River Watershed, includes two-and-a half miles of river frontage, 186 acres of deeryards, and is identified by the Vermont Conservation Design as a Highest Priority Interior Forest Block for conservation. Ultimately, the GMC aims to conserve over one thousand contiguous acres in the Deer Run Nature Preserve. To be established and funded by November 30, 2019, are Conservancy lands titled Phase I lands, located in Dummerston, consisting of approximately 287 acres along with additional Phase I Associated Conservation Parcels (2) and are located contiguously to the proposed Phase II lands.

It is the Conservancy's long-term intent to conserve approximately 1,070 contiguous acres within the towns of Newfane, Brookline and Dummerston. They expect to enroll all included acreage in the Current Use program – whereas none is currently enrolled. They also indicated that they aim to create an endowment through further fund-raising that will cover property tax payments to the three towns in perpetuity. They indicated that they will encourage widespread non-motorized public access to the conserved land, including hiking, hunting and other recreational activities. They have built and are planning additional hiking trails in the area and hope to be able to ultimately connect these to existing trails in Brookline and Putney in the Putney Mountain area.

In closing GMC requested a letter from the Brookline Planning Commission stating that it generally supports the project and that GMC project to conserve these lands is found to be consistent with the goals and land use guidelines in the Brookline Town Plan.

Following the presentation and discussion by the Planning Commission, it agreed to construct the letter as requested. During the meeting there were some concerns voiced regarding the Conservancy's ongoing financial capacity to make Town property tax payments, whether development limitations on the conserved land could cost the Town future property tax revenue, and some safety concerns regarding mixed hunting and other recreational uses, especially during

peak hunting season. On these issues, it was felt that either they were not high risk or that there were reasonable actions that could be taken to mitigate Commission member concerns.

Next Steps: Construct letter – Tom Kavet  
Green Mountain Conservancy to present to the Brookline Select Board – Week of  
November 17, 2019

- Review Marijuana Legislation (if anything new)

S. 54, a bill to regulate and tax cannabis sales was passed by the State Senate on February 28, 2019. In addition, the House Government Operations Committee approved the bill on May 2, 2019. The House did not finish its work on this bill before it adjourned in May and will address the S. 54 in early 2020.

The Planning Commission believes it has a responsibility to review the intent of this new legislation especially as to how it may impact the town of Brookline. Daniel Dobson agreed to review the legislation and report back to the Planning Commission. His focus will be in reference to the impact of growing, retailing and processing of cannabis in Brookline. Tom Kavet suggested that Daniel also contact John Bennett, Associate Director of the Windham Regional Commission to garner any reflections by him or the Regional Commission on this legislation.

- Review of any recent Windham Regional Commission correspondence

No correspondence

- New Business

No New Business or Incoming Correspondence

- Discuss any Agenda Items for December or Future Meetings

No future Agenda Items at this time

- Move to Adjourn – 8:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Daniel Dobson