

*Minutes*  
*Williamsburg Board of Selectmen*  
*October 22, 2018*

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in special session on Monday, October 22, 2018, at the town office. The chair called the meeting to order at 12 noon.

Present: David Mathers, Denise Banister and William Sayre

Also present: Marcianna Caplis (Conservation), Gaby Immerman (Mill River Greenway), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), David Nehring (Valley View Farm), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant), Mark Wamsley (Kestrel Land Trust)

1. Conservation land – Kestrel Land Trust – Collins property – Mark Wamsley of the Kestrel Land Trust described a large conservation project of several hundred acres in Williamsburg and Westhampton. Kestrel is asking the town of Williamsburg to hold the conservation restriction for the portion in Williamsburg. Marcianna Caplis, chair of the Conservation Commission, said that the Conservation Commission has been meeting with Kestrel for some time about the property, and she pointed out that accepting the conservation restriction does not make the town liable for anything. Maintenance is done by the Land Trust. There is a logging road and snowmobiles would be allowed. On dogs, they follow the local leash law, which on Williamsburg conservation properties means either no dogs allowed or dogs must be on a leash; Kestrel is responsible for enforcing dog laws. It was pointed out that the property is currently being taxed and after the purchase it will be tax-exempt so the town would lose a couple of thousand dollars in tax revenue; it is just residual land with no frontage and the value is low. The Board of Selectmen support having the Conservation Commission hold the conservation restriction and sign all appropriate documents.

2. Mill River Greenway –

Eversource land purchase – The Board met with Gaby Immerman of the Mill River Greenway Committee and David Nehring of Valley View Farm, the abutter buying the bulk of the Eversource parcel. The Board would like to come to a fair agreement and be a good neighbor. David Nehring said that he and his wife had signed the Purchase and Sale agreement thinking that they were getting 41 acres and the town was getting 4 but that the proposal after the survey had the town getting 5.4 acres and cutting off their access to the road he uses for his farm. He said he thought they owned the road and it was only when the Greenway Commission put forward its proposal and the land was surveyed that they discovered they didn't own it. Gaby Immerman pointed out that the map has been what has been proposed all along. She said the map had been drawn to put the Nehring/Fortgang sap tank on their property. She added that there was never anything definitive about the number of acres, it was always plus or minus because the land had not been surveyed. The Greenway Committee isn't attached to the number of acres; its interest is in the integrity of the meadow and its use as a park for open recreation space and for town events. Suggestions were made to draw the lines so that the road is on the Nehring/Fortgang land, or create an easement for them. The trees have been marked and it was proposed that the group go look at the land. Gaby added that a professional should be present to mark decisions that were made. It was suggested that the land be walked before any agreement

was made. The group will meet Wednesday, October 31, at 8 a.m. at the Valley View Farm farmstand – David Mathers and Bill Sayre, Charlene Nardi, Gaby Immerman, and David Nehring.

Town access – Gaby Immerman pointed out that until the planned bridge is built, the town will not have access to its land. She asked (1) whether the purchase can happen without the access, and (2) whether the Nehring/Fortgangs would be OK with occasional town use of the road until the bridge is built, suggesting that the farm could own the road outright and the town have a temporary easement. David Nehring expressed concern about opening up liability. It was suggested that both sides talk to their lawyers. There may be a standard document for temporary construction liability.

Merritts – Gaby Immerman also raised the issue of the little flag piece at the top of the parcel and the need for Phil Merritt, who owns parcels on each side, to access his land. She suggested letting the Merritts buy the little piece or giving them an easement, a good turn from the other abutter. Another possibility is to give the Merritts an easement on the town side. Charlene will consult with Town Counsel. It was suggested that Phil Merritt be invited to join the group on the land on October 31 so that he could speak directly to David Nehring and Susan Fortgang about his request.

Documents used

Map of Frank Collins property

Map of Eversource land

Adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Approved:

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Clerk