

LCHIP Board Meeting

Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests Conservation Center, Concord, NH

March 18th, 2013

Minutes Approved at July 9, 2013 meeting

ATTENDANCE:

Voting Members: Doug Cole, Cynthia Copeland, Sen. Jeanie Forrester, Harold Janeway, Rusty McLear, Bill Norton, Charlie Royce, Rep. Judith Spang, Julia Steed Mawson

Non-Voting Members: Tracy Boisvert(OEP), Charlie Bridges (NH F&G), Susan Francher (DRED), Jennifer Gornert (DAMF), Johnna McKenna (DES), Beth Muzzey (DHR)

LCHIP Staff: Jess Charpentier, Amy Dixon, Melissa Jones, Dijit Taylor

Welcome to the Conservation Center by Jane Difley, SPNHF President/Forester

Minutes of January Meeting

MOTION: Harold Janeway moved that the minutes of the January meeting be accepted, with the word "Chair" replacing "President" in the Election of Officers section

SECOND: Julia Steed Mawson

VOTE: Approved unanimously

Cultural and Historic Resources Representative on LCHIP Board

LCHIP's recommendation that Mandy Merrill be appointed to the LCHIP Board to represent Cultural and Historic Resource interests is being reviewed by the Governor's office, which is also reviewing Rusty's reappointment representing the same interest

Scheduling

Board is satisfied with current day/time of board meetings so meetings for FY 2014 will continue to be scheduled for Monday afternoons, with possible time change to 2:30-4:30 if that makes more locations available.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

February Finance Report

MOTION: Judith Spang moved to accept the February Finance Report as presented.

SECOND: Cynthia Copeland

VOTE: Approved unanimously

Finance Committee:

MOTION: Bill Norton moved that the Board accept the auditor's recommendation and create a Finance Committee.

SECOND: Julia Steed Mawson

VOTE: Approved unanimously

The Finance Committee will consist of Rusty, Harold, Dave and Bill plus Doug and Charlie R (the officers are ex officio members of any committee) for now.

Community Conservation Endowment Investment

Harold reports that he, Rusty and Doug had a telephone meeting with the fund manager from Fidelity in the state Treasurer's office. The CCE contains about \$2.6 million invested by Fidelity. Currently, the fund has 60% stocks, 35% in bonds, with the balance in short-term funds. Fidelity doesn't change the asset mix without Board approval, but can change the funds themselves. It may be appropriate to increase the equity funds for the higher returns. The new Finance Committee will present options or a proposal at the next meeting. Harold suggested that the Finance Committee update the Board at least annually on the investments.

Community Conservation Endowment Income Disbursement

Income from the CCE is used to make annual incentive payments to grant recipients who have appropriately monitored and reported on the status of their projects. As requested at the March meeting, a summary of the number and possible size of payments to be made was provided in the Board packet. Dijit described how disbursements for the different project types are calculated with more money going to projects that are more difficult to monitor. There are 243 "payouts" to be made this year, a single payout being the amount disbursed to the projects that are least complex to monitor. The investment income through the end of February (2/3 of the year) is \$77,000. Tracy Boisvert explained how the Conservation Land Stewardship Program estimates the cost of monitoring natural resource projects for the state.

The timing of the payments is being moved forward this year. In past years, the Board has waited until the end of the fiscal year then voted to distribute some part of the total year's income. In the previous years, the amount distributed has varied from all to half of the available income. Rusty observes that the amount distributed should be sufficient to cover monitoring expenses and that it would make sense in the future to have a policy about what percent of the fund's income to give out and that perhaps the new Finance Committee can make some proposals about that to the Board.

MOTION: Harold Janeway moved to distribute the entire \$77,000 income to date in monitoring payments.

SECOND: Judith Spang

VOTE: Fails: 2 – 6

MOTION: Rusty moves to distribute \$48,600 (243 payouts x \$200/payout) in monitoring payments.

SECOND: Charlie Royce

VOTE: Approved unanimously

Upcoming Budget and Schedule Concern

A main task at the June Board meeting is to review and approve the LCHIP administrative budget and to set a grant round schedule if appropriate. Since the administrative budget and the grant round are closely connected to the State budget, it may be necessary to move the meeting scheduled for June 17 into July to be sure the state budget will be finalized. Beth suggests that make that a standing schedule element every state budget year might make sense.

STAFF UPDATES AND ACTION ITEMS

Projects Closed Since Last Meeting

Unusually few projects have closed since January, but two of the three are left from Grant Round 7, (2007) so are good to finally have completed. Staff expects the list to be longer at the next meeting.

Cottage at the Fells:

Continuing discussion of public access at the Cottage at the Fells from previous meeting. There was hope that the DHR easement on the Fells might have some language that would help resolve this, but the easement turns out to not include the Cottage. The Fells insurance company will not sanction unsupervised access to the Cottage. Fells staff feels that safety of visitors and property can be maintained with a minimum of three days of escorted public access a year.

MOTION: Charlie Royce moves to retain the standard Project Agreement language and modify the Stewardship Agreement language as proposed in the Project Status report so that "Recipient shall allow escorted access to the Property for a minimum of three days per year, by appointment or as an organized event. Scheduling shall be at the Recipient's discretion and shall take into account weather conditions, existing access conditions, and concerns for public safety. At other times deemed reasonable by Recipient, persons affiliated with educational organizations, professional architectural associations, and historical societies shall be admitted to study the Property. LCHIP may make photographs, drawings, or other representations documenting the significant historical, cultural, and architectural character and features of the Property and distribute them to magazines, newsletters, or other publicly available publications, or use them to fulfill its charitable and educational purposes.

SECOND: Rusty McLear

VOTE: Approved unanimously

Standards and Practices:

LCHIP grant recipients are required to accept the Standards and Practices of the Land Trust Alliance, the professional guidelines endorsed by both the land conservation and historic preservation communities. At previous meetings, the Board has agreed that a review of LCHIP operations against the Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices is worthwhile. This is the first installment.

Dijit speaks briefly about how LCHIP's operations follow the first few standards and their related practices. The Board packet included the same summary. At this meeting, topics covered include Standard 1 Mission, Practices A-D, Mission, Planning and Evaluation, Outreach, Ethics) and Standard 2 Compliance with Laws (Practices A – E, Compliance with Laws, Non-Profit Incorporation and Bylaws, Tax Exemption, Record Policy and Public Policy). In this group, with the note that LCHIP is not a federal 501(c)(3), the biggest issue the lack of a clear written records policy.

The intent is to continue similar presentation during each (or most) meeting until all 15 Standards and their associated Practices have been discussed and areas in need of improvement have been identified. The Board can then consider whether to formally adopt the Standards and Practices. One board member requests more details of LCHIP operations to assist in understanding the applicability.

Upcoming Conferences

- NHPA biennial Statewide Preservation conference, Friday March 22 in Plymouth 8:30 – 5:00
- Saving Special Places land conservation conference, Saturday, April 6 in Weare, 8:00- 3:45

Rebranding

The discussion of how to improve LCHIP's visibility has been under consideration since September 2012. Purchase and installation of signs for backlog of 50 projects that never got them has been on hold since September 2012, pending the outcome of the rebranding discussion. Dijit now feels that the signs as redesigned in 2012 should be purchased and installed. Future signs can reflect any possible change of name, slogan or logo. Board has no objection to this.

Legislative updates

LCHIP supporters have been doing a good job speaking about the importance of the program at the five House Finance Budget Hearings around the state.

Adjournment

MOTION: Rusty moved to adjourn at 4:45pm

SECOND: Charlie Royce

VOTE: Unanimous in favor

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Jones
LCHIP Office Manager

Approved by:

Doug Cole
LCHIP Board Chairperson