

## **Sabin's Pasture Working Group Notes from 04/14/08**

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM, held at Kellogg-Hubbard Library, Main Street, Montpelier VT.

**Present:** Todd Bailey, Katherine Cooper, Mary Hooper, Dave Keller, Jennifer Knauer, Rodger Krussman, Jim Libby, Neal Rodar, Leigh Seddon, Roy Schiff, Nancy Sherman, Jean Vissering, John Waldo, and 1 member of the public.

### **Continue Review of Draft Recommended Conservation & Development Plan**

Facilitator: Jean Vissering, Landscape Architect

Based on last meeting, the members of the Working Group agree that the Lower Pasture should be recommended for development. The conversation at the 3/24 meeting focused on what area, if any, the group would agree to include as part of a potential development area in the Upper Pasture. The group agreed that the Upper Pasture except the potential development areas will go into city ownership or other long-term conservation ownership and be open to the public. The group agreed that it doesn't matter how this part of the property is permanently conserved, as long as it is protected and open to the public. The assumption is that it will be owned by the city and under the jurisdiction of the Parks Commission.

Discussion focused on a 10-acre area of the Upper Pasture adjacent to the Lower Pasture, and whether to include this in the potential development area. The group also discussed two options that could allow for development of this area in the future:

1. Term Easement Option: design some sort of protection, such as a easement that runs for a specific number of years, for the area recommended for potential development in the Upper Pasture for a period of time (20-30 years), and delay the decision on how/if this area is to be developed to the future community. A term easement for the potential development area in the Upper Pasture would prevent any development from occurring in this area for certain amount of time. At the end of that period of time, the owner would have the choice of what to do with the property.
2. Permanent Easement Option: Assume there is a permanent conservation easement over all but the Lower Pasture, the area recommended for potential development could be defined in the conservation easement as a future development area, subject to specific criteria. This would require a third party to hold the easement over the conserved land (held by the city or another long-term conservation owner).

There was general consensus that the idea of setting aside land for potential development in the future based on future need and community goals makes sense. Group members raised the following concerns and questions that need to be considered in crafting the specific restriction on a future development area:

- How large would the future development area be? How far east would it extend?
- How many units will be recommended on the Lower Pasture and/or might be permitted in the future development area?
- Maximizing number of units on the Lower Pasture will be desirable.
- What types of housing will the group recommend? Will single family housing be included in the recommended mix?
- Important to create neighborhoods that are desirable and livable, so density will be a consideration.
- The draft recommended plan references traditional neighborhood design and also highlights the need for high density. Are these consistent? Do we need to clarify what we mean?
- If the conservation easement avenue were pursued, who would hold the easement? Other than allowing for the future development area, does the group feel there is a need for additional protection over the land if it is held by the City as a park? If not, the term easement option is preferable.

The group agreed that the term easement option offered a promising recommendation, but that the group needs to continue to discuss the public notification and decision making process upon the end of the term. The group discussed the question of whether the group should recommend a city-wide notice, city-wide vote, or particular process such as the convening of another group similar to the Working Group upon the completion of the term easement. Agreement was not reached on this question. Working group members present agreed that if a term easement is recommended it would be for 25 years.

- **Other work/announcements:**
- Communication Group is meeting to plan for sharing recommendations with the public. It is looking at a schedule that includes a public information meeting at the end of May/early June.
- Volunteers to draft the Working Groups Recommendations: Nancy, Roy, Jim
- The 4/11/08 draft of the recommendations through the first five items (through page 11), excluding the "conclusions" section will be posted on the city's website.

#### **Next Steps:**

- Rodger will draft a proposal and will send a draft out before the end of this week.
- **Site visit:** Monday April 28<sup>th</sup>, meet at 5:00 at the College Parking Lot next to the gym.
- **Next Meeting:** Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup> after the site visit. Meeting will be held at City Hall, room TBD. Group members agreed to meet as long as is needed to come to agreement on a recommended plan.