

## **Sabin's Pasture Working Group Meeting Notes 04/28/08**

5 PM – 9 PM

Visit to site followed by meeting at City Hall, Main Street, Montpelier VT.

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

Facilitator: Rodger Krussman, Jean Vissering

5:00 PM. Working Group walked the property.

7:00 PM. Working Group assembled at City Hall to continue discussion about Recommended Development and Conservation Goals and Objectives Report.

### **Impressions from the walk:**

- Lower Pasture is appropriate for development. Recommendation should be that development plans should make best use of the Lower Pasture to reduce need for development in other proposed development areas. This might provide maximum flexibility for a developer to create a livable community, in keeping with the community values as stated in the Report. Preserving the sledding hill is very important, so the boundary of the development area in the Lower Pasture needs to be carefully considered so as not to significantly impact the use of this area.
- Standing at the higher elevations on the property near the northeast boundary and looking down toward the river—if any development on the property was visible, it would negatively impact the experience of the park. Development in the Upper Area should be recommended only if the impact on the view is minimal.
- Regarding possible development of Area B of the Upper Area on the map: this area seems ok for development. Given the contours of the land, it wouldn't really have an impact the open space and recreational values of the protected portions of the property. But it would be a shocking view from areas off the property looking onto Sabin's Pasture. In time trees will grow up and screen the view of development from off-site.
- The area south of the Upper Area is an isolated pocket of land, separated from the majority of the proposed protected area by the potential development area. Working group members commented that this is both problematic (it might decrease recreational use, as it is somewhat isolated from the rest of the park) and, alternatively, it might turn out to be a nice natural area for folks in the development as they walk through to the field or to the river.

**General thinking about the Term Easement Option:**

- Concern about the term easement is that people would rather have certainty now, rather than defer part of the decision to the future. If the area in question would not impact the conservation values of the open space portion, wouldn't it be preferable to include it as part of the potential development area? Including land in a term easement would likely yield the same result as including it in the protected area because it is hard to imagine that this community would allow development on land that has been essentially part of a park for 20 years.
- Preference is to identify a just two areas on the map – a conservation area and a development area - within the Report recommendation. Delaying this decision for a future group is just creating another problem for the future.

**Points of Agreement among those present on 4/28/08:**

- The term easement will not be part of the Recommended Plan.
- The Recommended Plan will propose development in the Lower Pasture and some of the western portion of the Upper Area. The group supports maximizing development in the Lower Pasture prior to moving up the hill. Development in the Upper Area should be sited so that the visual impact from the height of land is minimal. Members of the group discussed how to define this area and how to clarify how much impact on the view is too much. Language will be drafted and the map revised and presented to the group at the next meeting.
- The eastern side of the Upper Area (Areas C & E) will not be part of the recommended development area because it would impact conservation values such as views and the wildlife corridor too much and because the area seems to have limited development potential.
- The Recommended Plan will explicitly state that views from the height of the land are important, and define on the map where the important viewpoints are.
- The Recommended Plan will include one or two bullets stating that development on the property should be sited to take advantage of future connections to development on adjacent properties particularly on Barre Street and Country Club Road.

**Next Steps:**

1. A subcommittee was assigned to draft language and updates for the Working Group's Recommendation, generally summarized below. This writing team includes Roy, Nancy, Jim and TPL.
2. Jean and TPL will draft a new map to indicate changes discussed at April 28<sup>th</sup>'s meeting.

- The map is to be conceptual. Mark the lines with broad strokes, to indicate conceptual lines, and allow for some flexibility.
  - Map out development areas, conservation land, and public-use lands.
  - Consider which landmarks to include in order for report to be meaningful to people (sledding hill, lower pasture for example).
  - Acreage will be rounded to use whole numbers.
3. TPL will distribute a new draft of the recommendations and a new map for the members of the working group to consider at the next meeting. After the May 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, the draft should be ready for members of the Working Group to bring to constituent groups for feedback. It was noted that the members of the Working Group may need a summary of talking points to supplement the information in the recommendations report and map.
  4. Next Meeting - Monday May 12, 5:30 PM at TPL office 3 Shipman Place.