Meeting at Town Hall convened at 8:30. Members present: Present: Anne Anable, Ed Germain, Betsey Harris, Henry James, Joe Cavanaugh, Jack Lewis, Bill Barker and Sue Yarger. Absent: Sterling Abram, Mike Walker, Bruce Simpson. The minutes of October 15 were approved with several edits. OSPC terms were discussed and agreed upon. Ed stated that he will submit the names, and terms, to Jeannine. Betsey talked about a recent Cheshire County Historical Society meeting that she attended. Robert Thorson spoke on stone walls and what should be done to preserve them in towns such as ours. The town that Robert used as a terrific reference is Harwinton, CT, which has an ordinance so good that other towns should look to adopt. Betsey noted that several years ago she saw a local landscape person taking stones from one of Dublin’s waterways to use to build a stone wall; she approached them and informed them that they were violating 3 laws; they returned the next day to resume stone taking. We discussed which committee should own the issue, whether it should be a concern of the Selectmen or the Conservation Committee; no decision was made.

Anne and Sue covered the Conservation Leadership Training session that they attended, titled “Intro to Land Conservation Methods and Organizations”. As Anne and Sue were late to get to this meeting, they missed the first hour. The Swanzey representative was unable to attend, so materials had to be handed out. Swanzey made impressive strides in the area of preserving land, right down to the pair of Oxen that partake in other town’s events as mascots for land conservation. There was general agreement, from the Dublin OSPC that a great deal of what they do could serve as a model for us; their blueprint was copied and given to all our members. Most of the rest of the meeting dealt with conservation deeds and how to read them and what they’re comprised of. The exercise that Anne and Sue participated in was to read through a deed and answer questions that were posed of the group.

Henry and Sue will be attending the next session “Landowner Outreach”. Betsey is looking into getting maps of Dublin. She spoke with Peter Throop about showing maps to landowners when we reach out to people regarding conserving their property. Peter said that he would take care of it as he has 3 cartographers at the Monadnock Conservancy. Aerial maps would be very useful to show why we’re here and what we’re trying to achieve.

In light of the economic climate, the ability to do creative deals with landowners is more difficult now than it was several years ago. Some indicated that it might be better since new development lots are not being bought to build as the demand is down now. This is something that we need to keep an eye on.

Betsey talked about how she is always approached by people who think that our purpose is many things. She gets asked to do something about x or y and to make it “go away” and isn’t that what we’re all about – things like the oak tree or the cell tower … neither of which is our purpose. Townspeople do not understand what our OSPC purpose is. Perhaps we need to publicize what we’re all about.

There was further discussion around Matt Tolman’s place. There seems to be significant conservation issues with the land that borders, and is part of, Mud Pond. They are looking for a special exception for a large building that they’d like to build to store large equipment. Also the permeable soil is an issue due to the runoff from the trucks and roof into Mud Pond. No hearing has been scheduled yet.

The OSPC budget will be rolled into the DCC budget as a line item. We will document clearly what is spent on OSPC and will track all spending. There might be some outstanding expenses from Dublin Days; those that have not submitted receipts should do so now, to Jack.

Bill talked about Westport MA Land Conservation Trust Inc and the Westport MA Land Conservation Partnership. It was started in 2001 and is comprised of trustees of reservation and town of Westport Partnership. Westport is a good reference as to how a town works together to conserve land. We should also look for opportunities to focus on, as Westport does.

We should plot out what our ideas/priorities/criteria are on a map, with lot lines, which would be a good beginning, taking it area by area and thinking the process out.

Dublin has already appropriated funding for a bedrock study but we do not utilize these findings. Maybe we should look at these studies and include them on the map so that we can make better recommendations.

Where does our committee fit? Our mission is long term. We should make proposals that are future-based appropriate.

Betsey will look to approach the owners of the property at the south-end of Mud Pond; she knows a family member who might be able to
make an introduction.

Upcoming sessions of Land Conservation Leadership Training. Initial preferences are:
   November 5: Landowner Outreach: Henry and Sue
   November 19: Conservation Planning and Project Evaluation and Selection: Jack, Bruce and Anne
   December 3: Stewardship: Caring for the Land You Protect: Jack, Bruce and Henry
   January 31, 2009: Land Conservation Funding: Ed, Joe and possibly more (a $20 fee applies here)
All OSPC meetings will be on a Wednesday at 8:30 a.m. The future meeting schedule:
   November 12, December 10.
The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Sue Yarger
Secretary