

Hollis Agricultural Commission

Thursday, May 13th, 2021



NAMES OF ATTENDEES

M. Post, T. Hardy, D. Harmon, M. Madden, C Husk. & D. Petry.

VISITING ATTENDEES

A. Colby, T. Dufresne

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 7:40pm.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. Public Input

- a. Stefanowicz: A. Colby, one of the property abutters, is present to express concern. over where parking areas and access road will be located. Lessee, DPW, and Tom Dufresne have met to assess parking. No decisions have been made as they are waiting for NRCS. A. Colby states that the RFP has an outline for an approximate road location and is not where Lessee is considering. His concern is whether that there are any official directives regarding what's blocked off for parking, and that the Lessee blocked off access. M. Post states that there has been no decision as to whether if or where a parking area would be. M. Post states there is currently a spot for a few cars to pull off near the main access point. Adam states prior to this, people were parking under power lines. Lessee states that the ropes on the two lower and upper were installed to deter turkey hunters; it was roped off so that trespassers can not do further damage and erosion and not to make a parking area. D. Petry states that that the plot plan, as part of the RFP, had existing access located in part of the lot that was subsequently sold off. T. Dufresne states there is a 30ft setback concern and wet areas near power lines. T. Dufresne states that the recommendations to NRCS to assess the watershed to reshape swale for drainage regarding access. Lessee states there is a two year plan for NRCS to evaluate and decide what approach to take. Lessee installed ropes from warnings that trespassers would be an issue. D. Petry states that Adam has submitted a "right to know" request to the Town. D. Petry read a letter sent by the town to A Colby on 12/22/20 which discussed the access road. A. Colby states he did not receive said letter. D. Petry queried as to what the specific issue is. A. Colby responded while not on his property, it was a nuisance to see. Lessee states there are a few people that have written permission to access land for hunting. D. Petry proposed working with DPW to block off the entire area. A. Colby states he is asking for consideration, not to dictate where the parking area or road is placed. Lessee states that another consideration is that the area below the power lines is going to be planted. Also, if people park under the power lines they have to go through the wet area or up the hill back to the access point. M. Post states these reasons are why the Town has a third party, the NRCS, approve plans that the Lessee is required to follow. Regarding temporary parking, there is very little way to enforce how to manage parking now. Until the plan is complete, the only way to control parking may be to block all public access. There is nothing we can do to stop people from parking in the upper area that A. Colby is concerned with. A. Colby states, regardless, there is an area roped off where people are parking. A. Colby has requested "right-to-know" access to non-public minutes. D. Petry states that under regulations each board will go back and review to determine whether the minutes can be unsealed. Adam states he is trying to address concerns, and he feels those concerns are not being considered properly, which is why he would like all documents. Lessee states he shares Adam's concerns with the access, and number of people on the property, and that these issues are common to many properties across town. Lessee states that federal food regulations (FSMA) are one of the largest constraints.

The ropes were not intended to be a parking area. Nothing is developed, and Lessee wants to work together with neighboring owners. Current roped area will block farm access. Everything that the NRCS outlines has to get approved by the Town, not the Lessee. Lessee brought up a similar situation in Woodmont on how they have the same issues with access. Lessee shares same concerns as A. Colby. M. Post restates, that in the short term, we possibly not allow any parking. In summary, there will be a plan that will come up front of Conservation for review that will be discussed in public, and there is currently no final plan. A. Colby is requesting a more structured process to where he can express his concern. A. Colby departed the meeting.

ENTERING INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION

M. Post made the motion to enter into non-public session, in accordance with RSA 91-a:3 II (d). Harmon second, motion passed 6-0-0 and the commission entered non public session at 8:37pm.

RETURNING TO PUBLIC SESSION

M. Post motioned to return to public session and to keep the minutes sealed under RSA 91-a:3, III. Harmon second, motion passed 5-0-0 (C. Husk departed during non-public) and the commission returned to public session at 8:56pm

II. Continuing Business

- a. Stefanowicz: Town needs to prioritize installing boundary markers. D. Petry reiterated that the Town purchased the land to protect open space and rural character, but one solution could be to put a buffer of trees, and questions whether that would be desirable since it's an open field and it could obstruct that. Lessee stated that perhaps Meridian could supply a drawing. D. Petry states perhaps under the power lines could be a suitable area for parking. D. Petry suggests that once Lessee gets the plans back we have a public information session to inform public on where things are.
- b. Town Meeting Warrant Articles 17
 - I. M. Post expressed concerns that WA 17 would violate food safety farming requirements for town lands leased for Agriculture. D. Petry states there is a House Bill 307 that seems to allow fewer restrictions. The house bill will not get voted on until after Town meeting. M. Post states that Article 17 specifically requires permanent public access for all passive recreation, and the Town May not get future grants to purchase additional lands if there is unrestricted access. M. Post submitted a letter to the SB addressing the concerns of the Ag Comm. T. Hardy motions that the Ag Com vote to not recommend passage of Warrant Article 17, D. Harmon, second, motion passed 6-0-0. M. Post mentioned that there are financial implications that are longer in duration than one year, and queried whether it would require two-thirds vote. D. Petry requested that M. Post send a letter to moderator expressing concern to address this aspect.
- c. Recruiting
 - I. D. Petry mentioned a lead. M. Post mentioned Cheryl Quaine from joint working group may be interested. T. Dufresne mentions he has a lead. M. Post will follow up on leads.
- d. Woodmont Sparrows
 - I. M. Post mentioned that Lessee is planning to leave an area suitable for birds unplanted, but that a designated permanent set aside is not appropriate as G. Coffey suggests. D. Harmon's understanding is that Lessee has informally set aside a few acres. T. Dufresne states top and back side of hill, is not too suitable for farming, and should be more than suitable to for birds. G. Coffey wanted a little more. T. Dufresne

is satisfied with the situation currently, but not sure the birding advocates are. T. Dufresne mentioned Audubon, NRCS, etc. seem to be not too motivated. D. Petry mentions that now a pollinator habitat is being requested in addition to the sparrow area. D. Petry states that his understating is the primary purpose of the easement is for agriculture, and wildlife is second. M. Post mentions that putting crops in the ground should not constitute a soil disturbance as specified in the section of the easement pertaining to excavation. Moreover, the entire area is a man-made habitat created by cutting down dead trees to prepare for planting. D. Petry states there needs to be a discussion with Nichols-Smith to state they don't have a right to designate anything. D. Harmon stated there are 27 acres of untouched land as part of Woodmont for wildlife use.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

D. Harmon motioned to accept the public minutes for the commission meeting on March 11th, 2021, T. Hardy second, motioned passed 5-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

M. Post motioned to adjourn at 9:26pm, D. Harmon second, motion passed 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted by M. Madden, Secretary