

1 JOINT HOLLIS CONSERVATION & AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONS
2 WORKING GROUP

3 Minutes of Meeting
4 February 16, 2017
5 Approved March 31, 2017
6

7 Present: Mark Post and Dan Harmon, Agricultural Commission Members; and Jonathan Bruneau and Mary Jeffery
8 (via telephone), Conservation Commission Members; Kyle Gillis, Director, Hollis Recreation Commission, Connie
9 Cain, Staff.

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11 M. Post called the meeting to order at 4:07 pm; M. Jeffery attending via conference call.
12

13 **NON-PUBLIC SESSION #1**

14 M. Post motioned to enter into non-public session, in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(d); seconded by M. Jeffery. All
15 members in favor, none opposed. The motion to enter into non-public session carried 4-0-0, and the work group
16 entered non-public session at 4:11 pm.
17

18 (Kyle Gillis arrived 4:13 pm.)
19

20 **RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION**

21 M. Post motioned to return to public session and to keep the minutes sealed under RSA 91-A:3, III; seconded by D.
22 Harmon. All members in favor, none opposed. The motion to return to public session carried 4-0-0, the minutes
23 were sealed, and the work group returned to public session at 4:14 pm.
24

25 **POTENTIAL RECREATION FIELD(S) ON STEFANOWICZ FARM**

26 M. Post introduced himself and the other members of the workgroup to K. Gillis, and explained the purpose of the
27 workgroup. At the 2016 Town Meeting, the warrant article read and was approved as:

28 *"ARTICLE 4 – Bond for Land Acquisition. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,550,000.00*
29 *(gross budget) to acquire full ownership interest to certain tracts or parcels of land, together with any buildings*
30 *thereon, in the Town of Hollis more particularly specified below, on such terms and conditions as determined by the*
31 *Board of Selectmen, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$2,550,000.00 of bonds or notes in accordance with*
32 *the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); also, to authorize the Board of Selectmen to issue and negotiate*
33 *such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon. The Selectmen are hereby also authorized to apply*
34 *for and accept gifts, grants or other forms of assistance, if any, in order to offset the raising and appropriating of the*
35 *funds referenced above. The intended uses are for agricultural husbandry, timber management, land conservation,*
36 *passive recreation and potential athletic fields for Town of Hollis residents, and other such uses as to be identified by the*
37 *Board of Selectmen."*
38

39 The workgroup, made up of 4 members total, 2 each from both the Conservation Commission and the Agricultural
40 Commission, and are working on the agricultural farm lease and bidding process.
41

42 D. Harmon stated that the workgroup takes no position on the proposed athletic fields; this will be a decision to be
43 made by the Board of Selectmen. The main goal of this meeting is to start the discussion so that both organizations
44 are aware of the wants and needs of the other, and for the workgroup to make the Recreation Commission aware of
45 conditions of the property.
46

47 K. Gillis stated that the Recreation Commission has been searching for suitable locations for new fields for a number
48 of years as the programs grow and expand due to resident requests. In his opinion, the lack of athletic fields makes
49 Hollis a less desirable community for people with children who want to participate in these programs. He stated that
50 the Recreation Commission feels like it's spinning its wheels searching for suitable field locations as much of the
51 properties currently owned by the Town have some restriction which does not allow for athletic fields. Since the
52 existing fields do not get any downtime during the spring and summer, and also get overloaded when used for Old
53 Home Days in September, the Recreation Commission is in desperate need of new fields.
54

55 The workgroup's main concerns are preserving the potential lease area for agricultural use, keeping erosion issues
56 under control, and agricultural access for any potential lessee. NRCS requirements were discussed, as the
57 workgroup must ensure that the property continues to adhere to NRCS standards for Agriculture. Erosion issues
58 have been found on the property, and the workgroup shared their concerns about erosion and the topography. K.
59 Gillis stated that other communities in New Hampshire have had to contend with similar or worse situations and
60 have been able to make it work.

K. Gillis stated his preference would be for the athletic fields to be located north of the existing house. Workgroup members discussed the topography, all uphill at that location. J. Bruneau explained that his profession is civil engineering and he felt that this location will be a challenge and not cheap. The area near the southern boundary has good street location, but is wet year round and would not be suitable for field construction. K. Gillis asked if anything could be done regarding the stream, no. Discussion continued regarding topography and field placement continued. D. Harmon asked if there was any thought as to the size of the athletic fields, K. Gillis would like to see 2 athletic fields on the property, each with the minimum dimensions of 120 x 120 feet, along with sidelines and parking area. D. Harmon asked how many parking spaces would be needed; K. Gillis felt that about 100 spaces would be appropriate. K. Gillis noted that soccer and baseball fields do not have the dimension requirements that other athletic fields, such as a football field, have, only a minimum size. J. Bruneau noted that there are flat areas in other parts of the property, such as at the top of the hill. This area is fairly flat, would depend on what other requirements would be needed but may be more suitable than other areas. The workgroup is concerned about providing agricultural access to the property. Forest activity access must also be provided, but as most forestry activities occur in the colder months, it is not as much of a concern. K. Gillis felt that several joint site walks should be conducted before any final determination is made.

M. Post noted that there is a 2017 Warrant Article coming up at Town Meeting to allow the Board of Selectmen to enter into a multi-year lease for the agricultural land. It is hoped that a minimum 25-year lease will be able to bid upon, but that decision will be up to the Board of Selectmen. The Lease bidding process could take a year to complete, and the workgroup hopes that the lease will be in place for the 2018 growing season. The Town, once the purchase is completed, has the responsibility to manage the land to the best of its ability, and allowing the agricultural portions of the property to remain fallow for an undesignated amount of time does not meet the best interests of the property.

K. Gillis felt that both organizations could work together to ensure that both organizations needs are met. Rectangular fields would be best for the athletic programs overseen by the Recreation Commission but he did not wish to designate an area tonight. There are several other aspects that need to be investigated, such as water source, costs, etc. Some further discussion about the property and potential field placement ensued with the parties agreeing to meet again soon.

K. Gillis departed at 5:09 pm.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION #2

M. Post motioned to enter into non-public session, in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(d); seconded by D. Harmon. All members in favor, none opposed. The motion to enter into non-public session carried 4-0-0, and the work group entered non-public session at 5:10 pm.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

M. Post motioned to return to public session and to keep the minutes sealed under RSA 91-A:3, III; seconded by M. Jeffery. All members in favor, none opposed. The motion to return to public session carried 4-0-0, the minutes were sealed, and the work group returned to public session at 5:19 pm.

MINUTES

M. Post motioned to approve the public minutes of December 19, 2016 as revised, seconded by D. Harmon. All members in favor, none opposed, and the public minutes were approved by a vote of 4-0-0.

M. Post motioned to approve the non-public minutes of December 19, 2016 as revised and to keep them sealed until voted to release to the public, seconded by M. Jeffery. All members in favor, none opposed, and the minutes were approved and kept sealed.

ADJOURNMENT

M. Post motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by M. Jeffery. All members in favor, none opposed. The motion to adjourn was carried 4-0-0, and the meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Connie Cain
Staff