

# HOLLIS CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting

January 3, 2018

Approved February 21, 2018

Members Present: Tom Dufresne, LeeAnn Wolff.  
Alternate Members: Laura Bianco, Joe Connelly.  
Board of Selectmen: Peter Band.  
Guest: Peter Baker.

Meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm.

## BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

### *Board of Selectmen – Peter Band*

The BOS discussed several issues regarding potential land purchases in non-public session. The Budget Committee has been apprised of the pro's and con's of each parcel. There is a budget meeting next week to continue the discussion. T. Dufresne plans to attend.

### *Planning Board – Tom Dufresne on behalf of Cathy Hoffman*

T. Dufresne was not present at the last planning board meeting, but he reviewed the minutes. The Planning Board held public hearing to discuss several zoning ordinance changes.

### *Wild & Scenic River Study Committee – LeeAnn Wolff & Laura Bianco*

They had a meeting on December 21, but L. Wolff nor L. Bianco were able to attend. L. Wolff received approval from Kim Galipeau to use the Hollis logo on the Wild & Scenic River website. L. Wolff stated that she is also working on a town description to accompany the logo on their website, as well as researching other Wild & Scenic project websites for possible content to add to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page. This content will be used to inform the public more thoroughly. Tom has not seen an update revision of the plan itself, nor the warrant article.

There were no Agricultural Committee updates and no Treasurer's Report available at meeting time.

## NEW & CONTINUING BUSINESS

### *Properties to Conserve-Preserve List Update*

T. Dufresne spoke to C. Cain, who has updated the preservation list. T. Dufresne stated that there were several changes; several parcels on the list have either been acquired already or have already gone to development.

### *NHACC 2018 Survey*

The New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions published their 2018 Survey. The feedback they receive is used to understand where the NHACC should focus their efforts to assist NH Conservation Commissions. T. Dufresne filled out the survey on behalf of the Commission.

### *2017 Town Letter*

J. Connelly read the draft letter circulated by L. Wolff. He had questions regarding how the funds received from the Land Use Charge Tax (LUCT) flow to the Conservation Commission's account and the general fund. P. Band and T. Dufresne walked through the process and how budget planning is done with regards to the HCC.

L. Wolff requested advice as to how best to incorporate the content received from the Nichols-Smith Land Trust and asked for more information regarding the relationship between the HCC and the Nichols-Smith Land Trust. T. Dufresne explained that, for newly conserved land, the HCC will often designate an organization to protect the property and to hold the easement and to periodically conduct easement monitoring on the property. The Society of the Protection of Forests is another organization that falls into this category, as does the Piscataquog Land Conservancy.

L. Wolff also requested guidance on how to begin the letter. After a general discussion, it was decided that the letter will start by describing the imminent purchase of Howe Fields development easement, and that the letter will

express the HCC's appreciation towards the Land Protection Study Committee and others involved in the forthcoming purchase.

#### *Recreation Commission Update*

There are no updates from the Recreation Commission since the last meeting. Town Attorney William Drescher is working on a conservation easement for the potential Siergiewicz property purchase. T. Dufresne explained that the Recreation Commission will be going through a planning process to handle the athletic fields on the proposed Siergiewicz site. The HCC is interested in protecting 12-acres of wetland.

P. Baker has attended this meeting to discuss this potential purchase. He plans to attend a Recreation Commission meeting, as well as any other public hearings that will be held to deliberate over this purchase.

Prior to discussing the Siergiewicz property, P. Baker wishes that his feelings are known regarding the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) since it came up in the earlier part of the meeting. P Baker stated that, every year at around this time, the HCC discusses requesting the full amount collected from the LUCT. The LUCT is revenue that the town gets whenever land is developed. It is State legislation that was put in place to help towns reduce the impact of development. A few years later, they added the ability for the HCC to partake of those funds if the town voted it in. The HCC decided to not take the whole amount and to take only 50%. The Town bought into the split and it has worked out well.

T. Dufresne stated that, yes, while it has come up for discussion each year, there hasn't been a serious push from the HCC to request a larger percentage of the LUCT. If the HCC required more funds than was already been made available, the HCC will pursue the bonding route. The HCC has historically received every bond that has been requested. Going this route also gives the town residents the opportunity to express their support through public hearings.

Returning back to the topic of purchasing the Siergiewicz property for athletic fields, P. Baker stated that the wetlands are particularly important in that area and should be vigorously protected from development by the people who own the property after it is sold. Baker read the Selectmen and the Recreation Commission (Rec Com) meeting minutes. Half the property is wetland. P. Baker asked if HCC will do site-specific wetland delineation and will be diligent about protecting that area.

T. Dufresne stated that it will be vetted by the Planning Board and HCC. There is a preliminary site plan which shows two soccer fields on the property. P. Baker asked if that plan will be available at budget meeting publicly.

P. Band stated that he believes this information is public and available. T. Dufresne continued that there will be a breakdown between the two properties: what is controlled by the Rec Com and what is controlled by the HCC. There will be a conservation easement on the wet area.

P. Baker furthered that this approach is analogous to what was done to the land currently being used as soccer fields across the street from the Lawrence Barn; we put deed restrictions on the wetland area. T. Dufresne stated that, if these restrictions weren't in place, we would have put the soccer fields next to the existing ones and not look to purchase land. In addition, Siergiewicz is a much better option than placing the soccer fields on the Stefanowicz property.

P. Baker continued that he lives in the neighborhood which abuts the Siergiewicz property. While practice fields sound nice, sometimes these things progress and become more structured. Several members of the neighborhood do not want to see big structures and facilities, nor loud PA systems, on the property. The neighborhood needs to be considered more carefully and must be included in what's going on. They have a situation on Orchard Drive where people come in day and night to use the property. Are these practice fields going to remain practice fields? Or will they turn into a sports complex?

J. Connelly stated that his understanding is that the Rec Com only needs 2 soccer fields and that's all. It would be very similar to the fields across the street from the Lawrence Barn. Everything happens at those two fields today: soccer, lacrosse, tennis, big kid's sports, little kid's sports. The Rec Com's plan is to build two fields and no more.

P. Band stated that no one has made commitments that the area will never be upgraded or improved in the future. What can and should be done is the abutters, the neighbors, should come to the meetings and look for mitigation

116 measures. They might not be able to stop what's going in, but it's reasonable to request mitigation measures such as  
117 fencing and plantings.

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119 P. Baker continued that it's important to not harm or degrade the wetlands. When someone develops property  
120 without wetlands ordinances supposedly protected, they don't need an agent like the Town needs an agent to  
121 monitor Howe Fields. The wetlands should be left alone.

122  
123 P. Band responded by stating that that's what the Town plans to do, by delineating them and protecting them. P.  
124 Band asked to consider a possible alternate scenario of how that land could be used; 6 to 8 houses can go on to that  
125 property with homeowners doing whatever they want. T. Dufresne stated that there was a change in last year's  
126 ordinances; you don't need to have as much land in each lot like you used to. In consulting with Mark Fougere,  
127 without doing an engineering survey, felt there was sufficient land for 5 house lots. The Siergiewicz owner has a plan  
128 that includes three house lots.

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130 P. Band state that, by purchasing the land, we would have control over how the land is used and protected. L. Bianco  
131 asked for confirmation that private homeowners would be bound by the same ordinances that the town would. Band  
132 stated that, yes, they would but the homeowner could put any type of chemicals they want on their lawn. L. Wolff  
133 stated that it is much more difficult to enforce ordinances on private land.

134  
135 P. Band agreed that both of P. Baker's issues are valid. They have been heard, and they will continue to be heard. The  
136 neighbors who live around that land should immerse themselves in the process so that, if this purchase is  
137 completed, the neighbors have had a say in the things that are mitigated, and that the quality of life is maintained.

138  
139 P. Baker stated that it has been difficult to get the facts when everything is in executive session. P. Baker requested  
140 that the facts are documented so that he may distribute accurate information to his neighbors. The facts should be  
141 available before the next budget meeting and any public hearings. With the public meeting in February, and the  
142 town meeting in March, there isn't a lot of time to distribute this information.

143  
144 P. Band stated that this project has progressed as necessary and has followed the process [to discuss a potential land  
145 acquisition under RSA 91A:3]. With regard to getting access to the layout of the soccer fields, he encouraged P. Baker  
146 to request the drawings from Kim Galipeau and ask if it's public information. If it's public, P. Baker is entitled to  
147 receive a copy of it. T. Dufresne noted that the drawing is a preliminary, conceptual drawing, and is subject to  
148 change.

149  
150 (P. Baker left the meeting at 7:45 pm.)

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152 *Cal Ripken Baseball – New Bullpen*

153 J. Connelly wanted to raise awareness that the Cal Ripken Baseball would like to build a bullpen on Nichols field,  
154 near existing fencing and other bullpens. He does not believe there is any interference with wetland buffers or  
155 anything that the HCC may be concerned with, but wanted to make HCC, as well as P. Band as the BOS liaison, aware  
156 of the project. T. Dufresne stated that he agrees; the area is far enough away from the woods, and there is no water  
157 nearby. P. Band also stated that there may be no issue, however he advised J. Connelly to speak with C. Cain or K.  
158 Galipeau to research the deed associated with the property as there are deed restrictions which cover what can be  
159 placed on the property and where.

160  
161 **MINUTES**

162 T. Dufresne motioned to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2017, meeting, as written; L. Wolff seconded. All  
163 members were in favor, none opposed, and the minutes were approved 5-0-0. Approval of the non-public minutes of  
164 the same date was tabled, as they were not yet available for members to review.

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166 **ADJOURNMENT**

167 T. Dufresne motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by L. Bianco. All members in favor, none opposed, and the  
168 motion carried 4-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

169  
170 Respectfully submitted,

171  
172 LeeAnn Wolff  
173 Secretary