

HOLLIS CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of Public Meeting

October 6, 2021

Approved October 20, 2021

Regular Members: Tom Dufresne, Thomas Davies, Mark Post, Paul Edmunds; Jonathan Bruneau, Joe Connelly,
Alternate Members: Laura Bianco, Karen Bridgeo.
Staff: Connie Cain
Guests: Peter Baker; Joe Garruba; Bernadette McQuilkin, Potential Member.

CONSERVATION PROPERTIES – Peter Baker

P. Baker stated that he is worried that the HCC has been or could be coerced or forced into making a purchase that is not in keeping with Conservation property laws and requirements. He noted that some recent Town purchases were intended to have a Conservation Easement or other similar restriction placed on the property, but this has not occurred to the best of his knowledge.

T. Dufresne stated that he and the late Town Attorney, William Drescher, had been working on a Conservation document for the Birch Hill properties at the time of his passing last year. He will need to bring it to the forefront again, as the easement language has been written but not yet accepted by the HCC or Selectboard. P. Baker opined that the language is key, whether is it in the deed, easement or another restrictive document; it needs to be completed and recorded to be official. P. Baker reiterated his concern that HCC funds would be used for something that it not conservation related. J. Connelly asked if P. Baker had heard anything to effect; P. Baker brought up the proposed Siergiewicz Field proposal from 2018 which did not pass. T. Dufresne clarified that the HCC would have been able to protect about 75% of 15.12 acre lot as Pennichuck Pond wetlands had the purchase been approved. Other points about the transaction were clarified.

P. Baker asked about the Ludwig Siergiewicz Farm property which the HCC recently conducted a timber harvest and cleared a field on. T. Dufresne stated that while the property is held under Town ownership, the Selectboard has allowed the HCC to perform work on the property in accordance with the management plan. T. Dufresne also stated that when the property was purchased, the then Selectboard had stated they would not entertain putting conservation or other restrictions on the lot. This could be brought up for discussion again.

Discussion continued on conservation easements, and which properties P. Baker felt could benefit from a conservation easement or other restrictions to protect the property. P. Baker alluded to the Recreation and Agricultural Commissions potentially pressuring the HCC into purchasing property which may not be only for Conservation uses. He noted 2 such properties, the previously mentioned Siergiewicz Field property and the Stefanowicz Farm property, which a part has been subject to an agricultural lease overseen by the Agricultural Commission. M. Post, speaking as the Agricultural Commission Chair, stated that the HCC does not ask other Committees or Boards to submit potential properties for purchase; in fact, if anything, it is the other way around. The HCC looks for properties which they may partner with other Town Boards and Committees to maintain and manage, and may request input from those Boards/Committees. P. Baker felt that this should be explained and made clear to the public, it shouldn't just be a "blanket conservation property." T. Davies supports multi-use properties and likes the idea of working with other agencies, both Town and private, to benefit the Town. P. Baker agreed that the multiple uses on a property are good, but any conservation land on those properties should be delineated from the other uses, both to the public and after the purchase. Any funds that the Conservation Commission puts toward the purchase should be proportional to the amount of property that will be considered "conservation" property.

Discussion continued in regards to the Rogers properties now owned by Beaver Brook Association (BBA). The Town received an executory interest in 3 parcels for \$150,000 contribution towards the purchase. P. Baker felt that, after the public hearing, the purchase shouldn't have been approved but did not express that sentiment. HCC members felt that any collaboration with BBA to protect property should be considered. A brief discussion on this and other properties ensued.

P. Baker thanked the HCC for allowing to speak at the meeting and express his opinions. (P. Baker left the meeting at 7:35 pm.)

BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

Treasurer's Report – Thomas Davies

As of September 30, 2021, the HCC account balance was \$1,600,565.28. Accounting for the \$10,000 in Steward Reserve, this leaves \$1,590,565.28 available as cash. T. Davies noted that, so far in Calendar Year 2021, the Land Use Change Tax

received to date was \$646,250. C. Cain noted there are at least another dozen or so properties to come out of Current Use before the end of 2021.

Board of Selectmen – Connie Cain

While there is no real updates to report, C. Cain stated that the Tax Collector had recently deeded 3 properties to the Town. Two of the properties are not of major significance to the HCC, the last of the properties may be. The “Walsh” property off of Rideout Road, MBLU 015-002, is land-locked, but is surrounded by Conservation Land on three sides near the Nashua River. The HCC may want to discuss taking this over from the Town ownership with the Selectboard.

Planning Board updates were not available at meeting time. (Joe Garruba left at approximately 8:00 pm.)

NEW/CONTINUING BUSINESS

NHACC Conference

The Conference will be held virtually again this year, and will be held on November 4, 2021.

T. Dufresne motioned to reimburse any HCC member attending the conference; seconded by T. Davies. All members in favor, none opposed, and the motion was carried by a vote of 8-0-0.

Any member attending virtually should submit a copy of their receipt to T. Dufresne or C. Cain for reimbursement.

Flower Bulbs for Elementary Schools

J. Connelly stated that the bulbs have been ordered, and should be delivered on October 11, 2021. All bulbs will be planted around both the Primary and Upper Elementary schools. A brief discussion occurred on photographing children planting the bulbs; J. Connelly will discuss with teachers and other school staff.

Conservation Community Outreach

T. Davies and J. Connelly will be attending the Amherst Conservation Commission meeting in November. Amherst has noted they have been experiencing problems finding 2 replacement members. T. Davies has also spoke to Lori Radke, Town Administrator, about attending the Bedford Conservation Commission meetings; L. Radke is a Bedford Council-person.

Wild & Scenic Rivers Committee

L. Bianco virtually attended the last meeting. They had stated that the Groton MA Conservation Commission has some good ideas on controlling invasive species. (B. McQuilkin left the meeting at 8:14 pm.)

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

T. Dufresne motioned to enter into Non-Public session to discuss potential land acquisitions under RSA 91-A:3, II (d); seconded by P. Edmunds. T. Dufresne polled the members, all those present voted to enter into Non-Public session by a vote of 8-0-0. The HCC entered into Non-Public Session at 8:14 pm.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

T. Dufresne motioned to conclude the Non-Public session and to keep the minutes sealed until voted by the HCC to release, seconded by T. Davies. T. Dufresne polled the members, all members voted to conclude the Non-Public session and keep the minutes sealed by a vote of 8-0-0. The HCC concluded Non-Public Session at 8:59 pm.

PUBLIC SESSION CONTINUED

MINUTES

T. Dufresne made the motion to accept the public minutes of the September 15, 2021 meeting as written; seconded by M. Post. All members voted in favor, none opposed or abstained, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

T. Dufresne made the motion to accept the non-public minutes of the September 15, 2021 meeting as written, and to keep them sealed until voted to release; seconded by M. Post. All members voted in favor, none opposed or abstained, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

T. Dufresne motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by M. Post. All members in favor, none opposed, and the motion carried by a vote of 8-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Connie Cain, Staff