

# Hollis Conservation Commission

Minutes of the November 16, 2022 Meeting

Approved December 7, 2022

Regular Members Present: Tom Dufresne, Mark Post, Paul Edmunds, Karen Bridgeo;  
Alternate Members Present: Laura Bianco, Bernadette McQuilkin, Peter Band;  
BOS Liaison: Paul Armstrong;  
Staff: Connie Cain

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

T. Dufresne appointed the following people to vote in Regular members absence:  
B. McQuilkin voting for the open Regular Member position;  
L. Bianco voting in the absence of Thomas Davies;  
P. Band voting in the absence of Joseph Connelly.

## ROCK FARM CONSERVATION EASEMENT & EXPENDITURES

T. Dufresne informed members that the Rock Farm closing has been pushed off until the first week in December due to some language concerns with the Rock's Title Company. While it is not considered a major issue, the attorney's will not be able to review until the week of Thanksgiving, and the closing date is anticipated to be in the beginning of December.

T. Dufresne has received Attorney bills from both Welts, White and Fontaine for work done by Atty. Robert Welts and Atty. George Baker who took over for Atty. Welts. Atty. Baker has since transferred to Morneau Law Offices, but has continued working with the Rock Brothers on the transaction. These bills cover work done on the transaction since 2019, including the Closing of Wills, Estate Documents, the Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE) document creation as well as other associated items since discussions began with the property owners. Welts, White & Fontaine did discount their fees for their involvement with the process. T. Dufresne stated that there will be additional bills coming from both Town Attorney's Christopher Drescher and Tom Quinn for their work on behalf of the Town. T. Dufresne stated that in addition to the \$550,000 total to be paid to the Rock Brothers for the ACE, there will be some additional closing costs.

*P. Edmunds motioned to approve the bill from Welts, White & Fontaine for legal services in conjunction with the Rock Farm Agricultural Conservation Easement in the amount of \$26,117.50; seconded by T. Dufresne.*

*P. Edmunds motioned to approve the bill from George Baker of Moreau Law for legal services in conjunction with the Rock Farm Agricultural Conservation Easement in the amount of \$6642.50; seconded by T. Dufresne.*

*The vote for both expenditures was held jointly, all members in favor, none opposed or abstained. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0-0.*

### Re-motion for payment:

At the request of the Finance Office, a secondary motion needs to be approved as ownership of the properties transferred from the Joseph & Shirley Rock Revocable Trusts, Jonathan Rock and James Rock, Successor Trustees, to Jonathan Rock and James Rock as individuals. This secondary motion was requested so that payment may be made to Jonathan Rock and James Rock instead of the Trusts. There is no change to the amount approved at the September 21, 2022 Public Hearing.

*T. Dufresne motioned to approve the expenditure of \$550,000 in exchange for an Agricultural Conservation Easement for the property known as Hollis Map Block 037-012 and 037-011, consisting of 263.90 acres; to be paid as \$275,000 to Jonathan Rock and \$275,000 to James Rock, owners of the property per deed recorded September 2, 2022; seconded by P. Edmunds. Voting in favor of the expenditure were: T. Dufresne, P. Edmunds, M. Post, K. Bridgeo, B. McQuilkin, L. Bianco, and P. Band; no one opposed, and none abstained, and the motion carried by a vote of 7-0-0.*

### Easement Monitoring

T. Dufresne shared that he has a draft contract with the Hillsborough County Conservation District for \$600 every two years to monitor the Rock Property. The contract is non-binding, and the HCC can end the contract at any time. The contract will be reviewed every two years. T. Dufresne shared that there could be an option to do non-physical

60 monitoring of the property, through arial photography of the property. The contract has been reviewed and approved  
61 by Town Atty. Christopher Drescher.

## 62 63 **COMMITTEE AND BOARD REPORTS**

### 64 65 PLANNING BOARD UPDATE– Tom Dufresne

66 T. Dufresne attended the PB meeting on November 15, 2022. He stated that the Orde “Gravel Pit” subdivision had been  
67 approved for 13 house lots.

### 68 69 SELECTBOARD UPDATES – Paul Armstrong

70 P. Armstrong shared that the Selectboard asked for an update on the Monument Square tree replacement plan; he had  
71 relayed to the Selectboard that only one bid had been received for the project. There was some concern that the Budget  
72 Committee would object to the use of Conservation Funds for this project although Town Atty. Chris Drescher had  
73 rendered an opinion otherwise.

74  
75 P. Armstrong, speaking on behalf of the Selectboard, requested that the HCC move forward with the project, and  
76 schedule a public hearing on the expenditure; they also noted that the Budget Committee does not have influence over  
77 how HCC funds are spent.

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79 T. Dufresne stated that the project would cost at least \$50,000, probably more. He would like to reach to Kyle McCabe  
80 to get an updated bid.

81  
82 B. McQuilkin felt that replacing the “Christmas Tree” at the western end of the common would be okay, but she doesn’t  
83 see the need to replace the others. She also questioned the use of HCC funds for this project; she does not feel it is  
84 appropriate.

85  
86 L. Bianco echoed B. McQuilkin’s concerns

87  
88 K. Bridgeo does not have a problem with the project itself, but she would like to see native trees replace any of those  
89 to be replaced. She would like to see a comprehensive maintenance plan for taking care of the trees once planted and  
90 making sure that the replacement trees are watered and cared for. She felt that having more diverse native plantings  
91 would allow for a greater educational purpose and with that scenario, would be an appropriate project for HCC funds.  
92 K. Bridgeo volunteered to help create a more comprehensive plan should the HCC decide to move forward.

93  
94 T. Dufresne stated that the replacement trees would be native; a local Hollis resident had volunteered to donate some  
95 from his property. 2 of the existing trees are invasive, so those would be replaced, and irrigation and maintenance of  
96 the trees would have to be worked out between the Town, DPW, and the Fire Department.

97  
98 P. Edmunds was sympathetic with B. McQuilkin’s comments. He did not think the plan was thorough, and 3 bids should  
99 be sought prior to continuing.

100  
101 M. Post was less concerned with the funding. The HCC is charged with protecting viewsapes, and likes that the Town  
102 has “skin in the game”. He feels that the community would support the project, but the HCC needs public input before  
103 moving forward.

104  
105 P. Band echoed the sentiments expressed, and felt that a compelling need to replace the trees has not been seen. He  
106 feels the plan is sketchy, and perhaps phasing in the replacements would be a better solution. He is not convinced that  
107 this project or the expenditure is under the purview of the HCC. He felt funds should come out of the Town’s General  
108 Fund; P. Edmunds and L. Bianco agreed.

109  
110 Throughout the discussion, several members pointed out the need for a forum where public input is solicited, such as  
111 at a public hearing or Town Meeting, before a vote is taken on whether or not to move forward with tree replacement.  
112 Based on the proposed plan, 5 trees are to be removed, and 4 of those replaced with native species. M. Post has created  
113 a PowerPoint presentation and will send to members for discussion at the next meeting.

### 114 115 LAW PROPERTY WORKGROUP – Mark Post

116 M. Post stated that 2 members from both the Agricultural Commission and the HCC have been selected, and a site  
117 visit conducted shortly. Cheryl Quaine, former HCC member, will be leading the Workgroup and reporting to both  
118 Commissions.

120 There was no Treasurer's Report available at meeting time.

121

## 122 **NEW OR CONTINUING BUSINESS**

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### 124 **DIGITIZATION OF CONSERVATION DOCUMENTS**

125 M. Post and K. Bridgeo shared information on old HCC acquisitions that they found in the old filing system and that in  
126 the digitization process. They would like to organize the files to be one PDF per property which would include all  
127 available data on each property. K. Bridgeo also shared that the thought was to create a master calendar for ease of  
128 access to the files and coordination.

129

130 C. Cain shared some tips on how to scan in the files and organize them; L. Bianco volunteered to help with going  
131 through the old files.

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### 133 **WINTER SEMINAR SERIES**

134 B. McQuilkin shared the speakers that had been lined up to speak and the subjects that would be discussed:

135 Doug Tallamy will present in January 2023;

136 Homegrown Natural Parks in February 2023;

137 UNH Cooperative Extension in March 2023;

138 Bioblitz in June/July to be worked out.

139 P. Armstrong thought that some additional topics to discuss might have to do with home gardening and how to best  
140 prepare yards and gardens for spring and summer.

141

### 142 **NHAAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE WRAP-UP**

143 B. McQuilkin debriefed members from the event and shared that Silver Lake was brought up as the example of the  
144 worst case of cyanobacteria in the state. There is a lot of work to be done to combat the cyanobacteria blooms in  
145 Silver Lake. B. McQuilkin volunteered to write a grant with help from NHDES.

146

147 C. Cain shared that the State had done a study done on cyanobacteria about 5 years ago to determine if cow manure  
148 in fields above Silver Lake affected the blooms in the lake. She was not aware of the findings, but felt that NH DES  
149 would be the entity to contact.

150

151 T. Dufresne shared that it would be best to work with Eric MacIntyre and the Silver Lake Association on the grant  
152 opportunity. P. Armstrong stated that the Selectboard would also need to be consulted due to possible permissions  
153 or requirements of the grant program. Discussion took place on how best to apply for the grants and the possible  
154 results from the findings. Consensus of the HCC was that B. McQuilkin explore grant opportunities and, if feasible,  
155 write a proposal with buy-in and collaboration of other parties outside of the Town.

156

157 K. Bridgeo attended several workshops addressing Increased Use of Conservation Land, Invasive Plants, Climate  
158 Change Impacts on Local Towns. There is a lot of information on climate change in relation to droughts in southern  
159 NH and an increase in forest fires. She would like to present this information to both the Selectboard and to the Fire  
160 Department.

161

162 B. McQuilkin asked about the wetlands permit process with the Lorenzo Lane Development to see if there was an  
163 opportunity to work through that process. Discussion took place on the wetlands permit processes and how to best  
164 go about inquiring about the status of them.

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### 166 **FACEBOOK ACCOUNT**

167 K. Bridgeo shared some of the ways that the HCC could have an appropriate Facebook page. Discussion took place on  
168 the pros and cons of the Facebook page, including legalities and use. The HCC decided to do a trial run of the  
169 Facebook on the condition that it would be announcements only with no comments allowed.

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### 171 **HOLIDAY MEETING SCHEDULE**

172 Discussion took place over the December and January meeting dates. The consensus of was to cancel the December  
173 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, but to leave the rest scheduled for January 2023.

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### 175 **MINUTES**

176 *T. Dufresne motioned to accept the November 2, 2022 public minutes as written; seconded by P. Edmunds. All in favor,*  
177 *none opposed, none abstained. Motion carried 7-0-0.*

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179 **ADJOURNMENT**

180 *T. Dufresne motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by L. Bianco. All in favor, none opposed, none abstained. Motion*  
181 *carried 7-0-0, and the meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm.*

182  
183 Respectfully submitted,

184  
185 Amiee Le Doux  
186 Recording Secretary