

Hollis Conservation Commission
Minutes of the December 6th, 2023 Meeting
Approved January 17, 2024

Regular Members Present: Joe Connelly, Mark Post, Thom Davies, Peter Band, Paul Edmunds
Alternate Members Present: Bernadette McQuilkin, Paul Armstrong
Board of Selectmen Liaison: Tom Whalen
Potential New Member: Kate Rydstrom
Hollis Recreation Coordinator: Erica Crea
Guests: Tara Happy, Hollis Elementary School Teacher; Paul Valihura, 273 Hayden Rd.

J Connelly called the meeting to order at 6:35pm. He appointed P. Armstrong to vote in place of Tom Dufresne and B. McQuilkin to vote in place of Karen Bridgeo.

P. Edmunds arrived at 6:37pm

COMMITTEE AND BOARD REPORTS

Board of Selectmen - T. Whalen

T. Whalen shared that the BOS is working on the warrant articles and that they would promote the Silver Lake Warrant article, although they want to make sure that the verbiage used is clear and doesn't cause confusion for the voters.

P. Armstrong noted that if there was a presentation on the article, that the BOS wanted the HCC to present on it, as it wasn't a petition warrant article from an outside group. T. Whalen commented that if there was a presentation, that the BOS would present on it, and that David Petry had agreed to present on it. He also noted that if there was need for further comments, that the HCC would present.

B. McQuilkin commented that there would be a NHDES representative there as well. She also shared that they were starting a social media campaign to get ahead of any misinformation about the grant.

Treasurer's Report - T. Davies

There was no report at this time.

T. Davies confirmed with Jacob Fitzgerald, Finance Director that the HCC would like to put \$700,000.00 in a one-month CD. J. Connelly asked when T. Davies confirmed with Mr. Fitzgerald about the CD; T. Davies replied that he had confirmed today. Discussion took place on whether or not the funds were placed into the CD for December. The money wasn't invested in December, and that they had decide that there was no automatic renewal as of yet. They will decide next month.

Karen Bridgeo arrived at 6:52 pm

NEW OR CONTINUING BUSINESS

2023 Annual Report - M. Post

M. Post shared that he had just finished up the report and sent it out 15 minutes before the meeting, and that there were a few places he left blank, as he didn't have that information yet. He also shared that he went through all the meeting minutes and took the highlights. He asked for comments prior to the holidays and that he would have the final draft at the next meeting for final revisions.

Elementary School Bulb Planting - Tara Happy

T. Happy shared an update on the bulbs that were planted at the Elementary School by 400 children. She thanked the HCC for their generosity in donating the bulbs and handed out a packet of some "thank you's" from the students.

Interview for New Alternate Member - K. Rydstrom

K. Rydstrom shared that she grew up in Hollis, went through all the Hollis public schools, and after moving away for many years, decided to move back to Hollis. She noted that she loved the outdoors and wants to help where she can in the town. J. Connelly shared that if she was still interested in being a part of the HCC in a month, that they would speak to the Board of Selectmen about an appointment to the HCC.

Hardy Field & Worcester Lot, Depot Rd, MBLU's 018-014 & 018-015 - J. Connelly

J. Connelly shared an update that the Town Hall had called the police on the situation regarding the illegal bike park. P. Edmunds noted that he had contacted Captain LaFlamme, but was waiting to hear back from him. J. Connelly noted that the

DPW could not get machinery in there to demolish the park, which would mean that they would need a team of people to go out and demolish everything by hand.

T. Whalen commented that after going out there with his son to further inspect the site, he thought that there may have been some mischaracterization on the situation regarding alcohol on the premises. He noticed that the cans that were there, were very old and most likely trash from years prior as that the site used to be used as a dump for the farmers nearby. He further noted that any trash that they brought on site was put in a trash bag and that the tools they used were neatly stored in a makeshift shed. As a result, he shared that, rather than mischaracterizing those who did this, that he was more so concerned with the fact that it was conservation land. Discussion took place on a less harsh response on those who constructed the park, and working with them to address the clean-up and possibly moving the structures to another, more appropriate location. B. McQuilkin shared that she would be happy to help the Recreation Committee create a solution to this problem.

Hardy Field & Worcester Lot Signage - Erica Crea, Recreation Coordinator

Erica shared that she would like to put up wooden signs on the wooden fence on Hardy North and Hardy South stating “Dogs must be on a leash. Please clean up after your dog. No Alcohol. Golf Prohibited.” because she has been dealing with dog waste on the land that she is having to clean up. She will be purchasing baggies for dog waste and putting them all around the facilities. She is also dealing with alcohol bottles that are being thrown into porta-potties and creates issues with maintenance, and the fields are being used as a driving range, which causes divots that are hazardous for children playing soccer, and create further safety hazards for lawn mowers potentially mowing over a golf ball, causing it to shoot outward. The sign would be wooden, white, with green lettering.

P. Armstrong shared that he was happy to support the signage, but felt that the HCC did not have the authority to approve the language. Discussion took place on the Selectboard approving verbiage of the signs, specifically addressing the “No Golf.” K. Bridgeo commented that even though they have no say in verbiage, that if she saw language included, such as “Police take note”, that she might pay closer attention to it.

P. Armstrong motioned to approve the placement of signs on the Hardy Field and Worcester Lot as stated; seconded by M. Post. All in favor, none opposed or abstained, motion carried by a vote of 7-0-0.

Property Management Plans, Craig Birch & Joe Connelly

C. Birch shared that he had not yet finished the Flint Brook Properties management plan update and noted that Chris Kane, who was working on a management plan for the Rideout-Ranger property, had passed away, and that he had inquired to Joe Connelly and Tom Dufresne if they wanted him to include the Rideout-Ranger property as well and include that update into what he was already working on. J. Connelly commented that he would love to have C. Birch work on monitoring the properties.

C. Birch clarified that he was only working on the management plans as of yet, but that he was happy to work with the HCC on the annual monitoring of the properties as well. J. Connelly also stated that he was not aware that any updates or plans were formalized prior to Mr. Kane’s passing, so no further information is available on the Rideout-Ranger property.

J. Connelly motioned to expand the scope of Craig Birch’s management plan of the Flint Brook, Rideout-Ranger, Lord and Rich Tree Farm properties; seconded by P. Edmund. All in favor, none opposed or abstained, motion carried by a vote of 7-0-0.

Siergiewicz Gate - J. Connelly

P. Armstrong submitted his receipts for the materials and labor for the gate to be reimbursed. This had been approved at the September 6, 2023 meeting.

NHDES Bill- J. Connelly

J. Connelly shared that he had received a bill from the NHDES for the annual dam registration fee in the amount of \$400.00. M. Post asked what the fee paid for; J. Connelly replied that it was the inspection of the dam. Discussion took place on which dam they were paying the fee for.

T. Davies motioned to expend \$400 to pay the NHDES annual dam registration fee; seconded by P. Edmunds. All in favor, none opposed or abstained, motion carried by a vote of 7-0-0.

(Staff Note: The NHDES Annual Dam Registration is submitted to the HCC, but is paid by the Town. CC)

Invasives Throughout Town - P. Valihura

Mr. Valihura of 273 Hayden Rd shared that while walking down the road, near a culvert that drains into a pond, he noticed that an invasive species, Japanese Knotweed, is growing up there. He reached out to B. McQuilkin, who got the State involved and alerted the HCC about the issue. P. Valihura then went on to share that a few weeks later, he saw the same growth of

124 invasives at the Stump Dump, at the entrance and the fill. His thought was when the culvert area got filled in, the fill used
 125 came from the Stump Dump and expanded the reach of the invasives to multiple locations. He continued to share other
 126 locations where he noticed invasives, particularly in the south part of Town.
 127

128 Discussion took place on how to treat the invasives and eradicate them; herbicides are not effective on Japanese Knotweed.
 129 B. McQuilkin suggested a seminar on how to treat Japanese Knotweed. Further discussion took place on how to make sure
 130 the stump dump doesn't continue the spread of invasives. B. McQuilkin had informed the DPW Director Joan Cudworth
 131 about the invasive at the Stump Dump. Discussion continued on invasives and how to control them further in different
 132 scenarios, and additional locations. M. Post asked if there was something such as "Best Practices for Stump Dump
 133 management" in regards to invasive species; B. McQuilkin volunteered to work with various people, such as J. Cudworth,
 134 Doug Cygan at the State Dept. of Agriculture, among others, on the best possible solution for the Stump Dump. P. Valihura
 135 volunteered to go throughout the town to find invasives, and report back to the HCC on the locations. B. McQuilkin stated
 136 that when this is determined, a seminar should be held to educate property owners; K. Bridgeo also shared information about
 137 software available from the State to identify and geolocate the invasives. Discussion continued on how and who to involve
 138 once the data has been compiled, and potential State or other funding for remediation.
 139

140 *Conservation Land Enhancements - J. Connelly*
 141 J. Connelly shared that after the memorial bench approval, there is now more precedent for conservation land enhancements,
 142 which require some thought on the part of the HCC on how to approach more cases as they appear.
 143

144 Discussion took place on writing out a procedure, and/or dealing with each case individually. M. Post pointed out that the
 145 HCC should remain within their purview, specifically regarding the property value, and proper conservation, while a bench,
 146 or something similar that enhances the trails on conservation land, should be dealt with by the trails committee. And
 147 furthermore, the verbiage used on the bench, or sign, etc., is not approved by the HCC, but more likely the BOS. T. Whalen
 148 commented that the HCC has to approve based on their purview, and then it is taken to the BOS, who have to decide whether
 149 or not to accept a private donation from the family who are presenting this memorial project, based on if it serves the public
 150 well.
 151

152 M. Post further clarified that the conservation charter is the policy that they need to follow, as it states the purview of the
 153 HCC, rather than creating a new policy. T. Whalen noted that the BOS does not have a written policy on these cases, and
 154 takes them individually.
 155

156 *Conservation Stewards Appointments - J. Connelly*
 157 J. Connelly asked that everyone take a look at the top ten largest Conservation Properties and in the next couple of weeks
 158 pick out which one they would like to steward.
 159

160 P. Edmunds volunteered to take the Law Property.
 161 P. Band volunteered to take the Rideout Property.
 162 K. Bridgeo volunteered to take the Woodmont Property.
 163 P. Armstrong volunteered to take the Stefanowicz Property.
 164 P. Edmunds volunteered to take the Rock Property.
 165

166 Discussion took place on the next properties that need stewardship and possible new properties that need scouting.
 167

168 *PFAS - J. Connelly*
 169 J. Connelly shared that he had received a letter from New Hampshire Dept. of Environmental Services regarding PFAS
 170 contamination on an abutting property. He noted that others might be receiving that same letter from the state. P. Band and
 171 J. Connelly clarified that the HCC website had information and links on how to deal with PFAS.
 172

173 *Letter from NHDES - J. Connelly*
 174 J. Connelly shared that the NHDES gave the Ladd Lane development, on the old Gravel Pit in the Southeast part of Town,
 175 a good assessment.
 176

177 *Nissitissit River - B. McQuilkin*
 178 B. McQuilkin shared that T. Whalen and P. Edmunds are going to the Nissitissit River Seminar with her. She noted that there
 179 were good networking possibilities.
 180

181 *Site Walk on Proctor Hill-Deacon Lane Development - B. McQuilkin*
 182 B. McQuilkin shared that on the site walk, they saw a lot of natural habitat destruction on the property. She commented that
 183 it would be worthwhile to somehow get ahead of the process before the land exchange takes place. Discussion took place on
 184 the possibilities to look at properties before other developers buy them.
 185

186 K. Bridgeo commented that in the process of learning more about the Deacon Lane Development, she found out that the
187 process in which the developers took to get approval, was very well thought out in finding loopholes to build their
188 development, through an approved “intent to cut.” She suggested that there might be a way that the HCC gets involved to
189 prevent this behavior.

190
191 P. Armstrong noted that when the “intent to cut” is filed, that the HCC is supposed to be notified. Discussion took place on
192 timelines and processes of how to get in on the ground floor of these conversations.

193
194 (Staff Note: An “Intent to Cut Wood or Timber” is governed by RSA 79, and an Intent to Cut can only be refused by the
195 Town for 3 items: the Form is improperly completed; the property owner has delinquent property taxes, or a bond is necessary
196 prior to approval. Intents are handled by the Assessing Office. There is NO requirement to notify the HCC of filing. CC)

197
198 **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

199 J. Connelly tabled the approval of the minutes until the next meeting.

200
201 **ADJOURNMENT**

202 *J. Connelly motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:24pm; seconded by T. Davies. All in favor, none opposed or*
203 *abstained, motion carried by a vote of 7-0-0.*

204
205 Respectfully Submitted,
206 Amiee Le Doux
207 Recording Secretary