

HOLLIS CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting

June 6, 2018

Approved June 20, 2018

Members Present: Tom Dufresne, Thomas Davies, LeeAnn Wolff, Jonathan Bruneau;
Alternate Members: Laura Bianco, Joe Connelly, Cheryl Quaine, Paul Edmunds, Karen Bridgeo;
Board of Selectmen: Peter Band, BOS Liaison;
Staff: Connie Cain
Guests: Mark Walsh, Adam Jacobs

T. Dufresne called the meeting to order at 7:03.

WALSH-DEACON LANE PROPERTY – Mark Walsh

Mr. Walsh wished to update the HCC on his continued efforts to donate a 10-acre portion of his property at 17 Deacon Lane to the HCC. This area has frontage on both Deacon Lane and Rocky Pond Road, consists primarily of Beaver Brook wetlands, and abuts other HCC land at MBLU 023-022. M. Walsh stated that he has done some preliminary work with Randy Haight of Meridian Land Services, and R. Haight created a preliminary drawing of the site. M. Walsh stated that he had spoken with his neighbors about the plan, and they all were fine with the proposal.

Should the HCC wish to proceed, M. Walsh will work with R. Haight to complete a Lot Line Relocation plan; R. Haight stated that waivers may be needed due to the wetland area. When complete, the plan will be presented to the Planning Board, neighbors officially noticed, and a conservation easement will also be drawn up. The Planning Board has asked for the HCC's vote and approval for M. Walsh to continue. T. Dufresne asked what the survey costs will be; unknown at this time. T. Davies stated that the HCC may be able to reimburse some of the costs associated with the project, as has been done in the past. T. Dufresne stated that previous Conservation Easement documents may be able to be used a draft; C. Cain will find and email to M. Walsh. M. Walsh stated that his intention was to preserve the acreage, and would prefer to see only foot traffic and no hunting allowed. T. Dufresne mentioned that the HCC does manage its property and may wish to conduct a timber harvest on the property in the future. M. Walsh will contemplate and will let the HCC know if that is acceptable.

T. Dufresne made the motion to approve moving forward with the Walsh Deacon Lane Lot Line Relocation plan, as proposed; seconded by J. Connelly. All members in favor, none opposed, and the motion carried by a vote of 9-0-0. Any reimbursements to be made will be decided after the costs are known. M. Walsh will return to the HCC as the project progresses.

(Mark Walsh left the meeting at 7:15 pm.)

HERITAGE TREE UPDATE – Adam Jacobs

Since his first visit to the HCC, A. Jacobs, with L. Wolff's assistance, has researched and spoken with various State and Local agencies, Ethan Belair and Andrew Fast of the UNH Coop, and other communities/organizations. His summary is that most communities do attempt to preserve older growth trees, there are not many left in the entire state, due to weather related events or farming activities. The hurricanes in the 1930's wiped out most of the forests in State, along with land being cleared before and after for agriculture. During his discussions with E. Belair and A. Fast at the UNH E. Belair informed A. Jacobs that he has previously done work on reforestation, and is a member of the Nashua Regional Planning Committee (NRPC). He suggested that an inventory of any old growth be done as the first step, and also suggested that A. Jacobs read papers written by Tony D'Amato which address the reforestation of late successional growth and characteristics of old forest growth. Dr. D'Amato is presently a professor with the University of Vermont, https://www.uvm.edu/rsenr/profiles/anthony_damato_tony. A. Jacobs discussed some of the items he had taken from his reading, (Staff note: A list of some of Dr. D'Amato's publications can be found here <https://necsc.umass.edu/people/anthony-damato> CC.) Land is used by a variety of people for a variety of uses. A study from UMASS Amherst suggests that reforestation efforts in NH are on the decline. The Siergiewicz Management Plan was also reviewed, felt very well written and a lot of work had gone into the creation. NRPC's MapGeo tool was also reviewed; felt that it would not be a good tool to use, as the scale is too large.

A. Jacobs has also contacted several groups involved in old growth restoration; Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary in Monson, MA, website: <http://www.norcrosswildlife.org/>; the Northeast Wilderness Land Trust in Vermont, website <http://www.newildernesstrust.org/> and others. He also attempted to contact Peter Smith at Beaver Brook Association, but has not been able to reach him to date. He has spoken to Craig Birch, a member of both the Town

Forest Committee and Beaver Brook Association (BBA). A. Jacobs felt that good work has been done for both the Town Forest and BBA, with C. Birch informing him that about 5% of BBA's forest is reserved as a "No Touch" area, which can be used for research. T. Dufresne stated that some of the HCC properties have not been harvested in years, due to access issues or restrictions. When a cut is done on HCC properties, some trees are left as seed trees or as part of a management plan. He felt the HCC has done what A. Jacobs is asking for. A. Jacobs agreed, but no idea of number of trees or locations, and no formal protection. While cannot do an inventory on private property, the Town properties could be inventoried. T. Dufresne asked A. Jacobs if he would like to undertake the inventory and map these trees/areas. A. Jacob also touched base on future needs to maintain and preserve these trees. C. Quaine felt it would be dependent on property and use.

L. Wolff asked what needs to occur next. A. Jacobs stated that there is a lot of interest and support in the field to move forward. There is a difference between "no touch" and the preservation of large or heritage trees. J. Bruneau asked how trees, locations, and data would be documented and preserved. L. Wolff asked if this could be included in the Master Plan. T. Davies felt that loggers should also be made aware of these trees, some are conscientious, and some are not. T. Dufresne stated that they could not require private owners to preserve, but could encourage them to participate in best forest management practices. L. Bianco felt the focus should be on Town owned properties, and asked if HCC members could mark trees as "do not cut" prior to timber harvests; yes. P. Band felt that A. Jacobs has done a tremendous amount of good research, and would like to see him work with the HCC to implement these recommendations. P. Edmunds felt that C. Birch could provide a list of any such trees in the Town Forests. A. Jacobs suggested that approximately 5 -10% of the Town owned areas be dedicated to heritage tree preservation; at this time, the HCC owns 786 +/- acres, so at 10%, that would be 78.6 acres. Trees can also be designated as heritage trees with brass markers or other methods.

L. Wolff asked about upcoming timber harvests; none planned in the near future, but the cut on the Rocky Pond Road Spaulding Lot across from the Transfer Station is wrapping up. L. Wolff suggested that conducting a site walk on the Siergiewicz Farm Lot be done so that areas to preserve could be marked. A. Jacobs stated that any database could be posted on the Town's website, giving the identification and locations of any such trees/areas. A. Jacobs asked what would be a reasonable goal. After discussion of area needed per tree, it was felt that approximately 1500 sf would be allowed per tree; 1100 sf for pine trees. This equates to approximately an acre for 7-8 trees, or 11 pine trees. Felt the easiest way to implement, and Ethan Belair agreed with this methodology.

L. Wolff thought that it might be also worthwhile to reinvestigate removal of invasive species on Siergiewicz Farm; C. Cain reminded members that this lot is owned by the Town, and any activity on the property would need authorization of the Board of Selectmen. L. Wolff suggested that several site walks be scheduled, so that members have the opportunity to view. T. Dufresne will also contact Jim Oehler to find out when he might be available as well. The dates of Friday and Saturday, June 15/16 and Friday and Saturday, June 22/23 were suggested, pending availability. T. Dufresne will announce date(s) when determined, and per L. Bianco's suggestion, will entertain other dates/times.

T. Dufresne asked for any additional input. L. Wolff would like to research any regional input and see what other Towns are doing. She would like to see this program be successful from the beginning, and thought that getting familiar with one property, as a model, would be best. T. Davies suggested the Hildreth Conservation Area as an example; deed restrictions prohibit timber harvesting, and suggested walking this property as an example of a no cut area. Members commended A. Jacobs on his research and drive to bring the project to fruition.

(Adam Jacobs left the meeting at 8:02 pm.)

BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – Peter Band

P. Band informed members of the following:

- 1.) Siergiewicz Farm lot. If herbicides or other chemicals are to be used to remove invasive species, members should be prepared to discuss with the Board of Selectmen on the specific products/chemicals to be used in detail.
- 2.) Recreation Fields. There are a number of Town owned parcels that may be suitable for playing fields construction. The Board would like for the Recreation Committee to evaluate sites and return to the Board with recommendations. P. Band's personal opinion was that constructing fields on the Stefanowicz Farm would be a travesty, due to the loss of agricultural production land and the scenic view. However, the Board voted to approve a preliminary study for the field construction, and the Recreation Commission will return to the Board once that is completed.
- 3.) Stefanowicz Farm Agricultural Lease. The Board voted to authorize a 2-year agricultural lease on the property while plans for the property are still being discussed.

120 T. Dufresne noted that he had been scheduled to meet with the Board on June 4th, but due to their schedule, this was
121 to be rescheduled in July.

122
123 *WILD & SCENIC RIVER STUDY COMMITTEE –Laura Bianco & LeeAnn Wolff*

124 L. Bianco and L. Wolff stated that the Committee has asked for more support letters from NH. These were not to come
125 from the communities or local population, but from State agencies, the Governor, and the like. Drew Kellner of the
126 Brookline Conservation Commission has been working hard and diligently to obtain these letters.

127
128 *TREASURER'S REPORT – Thomas Davies*

129 As of May 31, 2018, the HCC Account Balance was \$537,489.83. With \$10,000 reserved as the Stewardship Fund, this
130 leaves \$527.489.83 available as cash.

131
132 **OTHER BUSINESS**

133
134 *SUMMER HIKEs*

135 T. Dufresne suggested that Siergiewicz Farm be one of the properties on which to conduct a hike. This would show a
136 property prior to any management by the HCC. The focus shall be on public education, and for all age groups. Other
137 suggestions were the Spaulding Lots on Rocky Pond where the timber harvest is almost complete; the Wright Lot off
138 South Merrimack Rd where a timber cut was done about 7 +/- years ago; and the Stefanowicz Farm property as one
139 of the recent Town purchases. After discussion, the following properties and dates were agreed to:
140 Siergiewicz Farm, maybe in 2 parts, for general knowledge and future plans, on Saturday, July 14th;
141 Wright Lot, on Saturday, August 11th.

142
143 L. Bianco volunteered to assist L. Wolff with pamphlet/handouts for the properties, and posting in local newspapers,
144 etc. T. Dufresne gave Monique Savoie at the Telegraph as the contact person. C. Quaine will also inform the Boy Scout
145 Troop so that they may be able to participate.

146
147 **MINUTES**

148 T. Dufresne motioned to accept the public minutes of the May 16, 2018 meeting as written; seconded by L. Wolff. All
149 members in favor, none opposed, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 9-0-0.

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151 T. Dufresne motioned to accept the non-public minutes of the April 18, 2018 meeting as written, and to keep them
152 sealed until voted by the HCC to release; seconded by L. Wolff. All members in favor, none opposed, and the minutes
153 were approved and kept sealed by a vote of 9-0-0.

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155 **ADJOURNMENT**

156 T. Dufresne made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by L. Bianco. All members in favor, none opposed, and
157 the meeting was adjourned at 8:27 pm.

158
159 Respectfully submitted,

160
161 Connie Cain
162 Staff