

HOLLIS CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting

May 16, 2018

Approved June 6, 2018

Members Present: Tom Dufresne, Thomas Davies, Cathy Hoffman, Mark Post, Jonathan Bruneau;
Alternate Members: Laura Bianco, Cheryl Quaine, Paul Edmunds, Karen Bridgeo;
Board of Selectmen: Peter Band, BOS Liaison;
Staff: Connie Cain
Guest: Craig Birch

T. Dufresne called the meeting to order at 7:01.

HERITAGE TREE UPDATE

In the absence of Adam Jacobs, T. Dufresne asked C. Birch to speak on the Town Forest efforts in preserving older growth trees. C. Birch spoke to the ongoing preservation of heritage trees, both within the Town Forest and at Beaver Brook Association (BBA). BBA has two regulations in place for such trees, either cut only if necessary due to disease or some unanticipated event, or never cut. They have a number of trees which fall under these regulations. The Town Forest Committee has not ignored these trees either, there is a portion of the Town Forest which has been left as protected, not to be harvested. If a rare, endangered or an outstanding example of tree species is found, these are left as "specimen" trees. C. Birch did not know if Adam Jacobs wanted to document these trees and catalogue, but he would not be in favor of an ordinance which told private property owners what they can or cannot do on their own property. He continued, stating that most mills no longer accept larger trees due to knots in the wood or other issues. Other Conservation properties, such as those abutting Flint's Brook have restrictions on cutting on certain areas. He felt that the Town and its agencies are already doing the items that Mr. Jacobs suggested, it's just not widely publicized.

M. Post felt that New Hampshire, as a State, does a great job at protecting and preserving its forests, and this is probably one of the reasons that there aren't "Heritage Tree" programs in place. L. Bianco stated that one of the issues she sees with harvesting is that there isn't an opportunity for smaller trees to grow into larger, older trees. She felt that this was one of the items that Mr. Jacobs was addressing in his presentation, and the reason why he asked if a "heritage forest" could be designated.

J. Bruneau asked what happens to properties which are land-locked. If they require a timber harvest, how is access addressed? C. Birch stated that there are number of parcels that are land-locked, and these can be considered for a heritage tree site if the HCC wishes to designate a property as such. He suggested the property near the Stefanowicz Farm, which is land-locked with no real access. (Staff Note: This property, known as the "F. W. Moore or Clayton Spaulding Lot" is MBLU 031-068, consisting of 7.50 acres. It is land-locked in the Muddy Brook area, southwest of Stefanowicz Farm. CC)

C. Birch stated that while he respects Mr. Jacobs' thoughts and concerns, he felt that the Town is already doing as he suggested. If Mr. Jacobs wishes to create and collate these trees into a database, a list of locations could be provided. There may be other ways that Mr. Jacobs could serve the Town on this matter, should the need arise. Additionally, there are a number State agencies that work on the same matter;

C. Birch left the meeting at 7:15 pm.

C. Quaine felt that the HCC could respond to Mr. Jacobs that there is a plan in place, and give the State agencies information. T. Dufresne responded that LeeAnn Wolff has been working with Mr. Jacobs on this, and has already referred him to several State agencies for further information. T. Dufresne stated that he does not want to curb Mr. Jacobs' enthusiasm, but the Town is already doing as he suggested. If the need arises for additional information to be gathered, Mr. Jacobs could be approached at that time.

BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

PLANNING BOARD – Cathy Hoffman

At the May 15th meeting, the Planning Board addressed the following items:

- 1.) Farm Stand on Winterberry Way. This was approved with conditions, including owners can only sell lavender grown on the actual property, parking is limited to 10 spaces on the actual property, and no parking allowed on Ranger Road among others.

- 2.) Lovering Subdivision. The proposed subdivision consists of 6 house lots, with the original house lot and 5 new lots on the 28.60 parcel at MBLU 025-004, 54 Pine Hill Road. This is still in the Design Review phase, and the Planning Board has asked the engineer to submit additional information. This was continued to the next Planning Board meeting. The Planning Board postponed the Lovering property site walk, due to thunderstorms in the area. This is anticipated to be rescheduled prior to the Planning Board meeting on June 19th.
- 3.) Site Plan for the Technology Garden LLC building at 22 Proctor Hill Rd, MBLU 052-012, to allow Neil Stone Karate Academy to operate a Karate School in the building, which was formerly the Hollis Montessori School. Approval was granted.
- 4.) Site Plan to expand an existing screen printing business by 1,620 square feet within the existing structure; owned by Thomas Walton, 265 Proctor Hill Road, MBLU 011-008. This was approved, to allow the existing tenant additional space to fit his machines. T. Davies asked about impact to local wetlands and surrounding areas; C. Hoffman stated that the tenant is using the same materials as in the original site plan approval, so she did not think the expansion would have a negative impact.
- 5.) Minor Subdivision of MBLU 034-019, Federal Hill Rd. This is the remaining Hildreth Family parcel on Birch Hill that is being transferred to the Town. As a portion of the property was in Milford, a subdivision plan was needed to create separate lots in both Hollis and Milford. Milford's Planning Board has already approved the subdivision, and Hollis approved as well.
- 6.) Presentation by Joseph Garruba, Town resident. C. Hoffman explained that Mr. Garruba wished to address several items with the Planning Board, including:
- a.) More scenic roads to be added. There have not been any roads designated as scenic since 2003. Under scenic road requirements, there is a 100 foot setback from the road. Any existing structure would be grandfathered, but if they wish to change/add anything in the setback, a variance would be required from the Zoning Board. This could add an undue burden to property owners. The roads specifically named included Howe Lane, Pine Hill Road, Nartoff Road among "many others," per Mr. Garruba.
 - b.) Expand the aquifer boundaries. C. Hoffman stated that the aquifers are determined/delineated by the State, not the Town, and are created by geology, not man.
 - c.) Eliminate all private roads, and make them public. Additionally, all Town roads should be a minimum width of 28 feet of pavement.
 - d.) Change Senior Housing regulations. C. Hoffman felt there might be some disconnect between the actual regulations and interpretation on this matter.
 - e.) Increase acreage requirement in the Rural Zone from 2 acres to 3 acres.
- K. Bridgeo asked what justification was provided; C. Hoffman stated there was none, nor was any statement made as to justification. There were other items he wished to address, but the Planning Board only allowed 10 minutes for the presentation, due to their full agenda.

WILD & SCENIC RIVER STUDY COMMITTEE –Laura Bianco

L. Bianco reported that with the exception of one Town that had tabled the item, all of the Massachusetts Towns had approved the draft report along with their New Hampshire counterparts.

A request has been made to have the Town Clerk certify the vote taken at Town Meeting which passed the warrant article. L. Bianco will address with the Town Clerk.

There were no Board of Selectmen or Treasurers Reports available at meeting time.

ROADSIDE CLEAN-UP SUMMARY – Thomas Davies

T. Davies thanked all members for their efforts up to and on the day of the event, May 5th. Based on the map used to assign roads, about 85 to 90% of the Town was covered, which is record-setting. Joan Cudworth of the Transfer Station will be asking for information on how many bags were used, so that the State can receive additional funding for more bags. While there had been some blue bags left on the sides of some roads for pick-up, the turnout was great and the whole event was very successful.

T. Davies suggested that the old tent be retired, as it tried to escape the Transfer Station several times due to wind. The Transfer Station location has worked out well over the past several years, although T. Davies would prefer to be located near the recycling area for increased visibility. Joan Cudworth informed him that some residents had also asked about safety vests, gloves, etc. T. Dufresne felt that the costs should be investigated for next year, and some could potentially be purchased depending on costs. Additionally, the National Honor Society had requested signature on Community Service forms, as this is a quaine requirement. This could be communicated to similar organizations as a way to perform the requirement. C. Quaine noted, and will work on this for next year. The Police Department's electronic sign has been used in the past as a reminder of the event, and this should be requested again next year.

T. Davies noted that most of the items picked up were alcohol related; he was concerned that there is a significant amount of drinking and driving occurring. Littering is considered a Class 2 misdemeanor, and can include fines of up to \$1200. P. Band suggested leaving this to the Police Department to address.

OTHER BUSINESS

NH COVERTS PROGRAM

T. Dufresne stated that he had attended the NH Coverts Program earlier this month, which encourages the promotion of wildlife conservation and forest stewardship. At this time, he would like to bring forward the Ludwig Siergiewicz Farm property for consideration. The property is located at MBLU 046-051, consisting of 79.76 acres, which the Town purchased in 2005. This property is accessible via a Class VI road that runs from Witches Spring Road to Mooar Hill Road. Jim Oehler had created a management plan in 2012-2013 that made recommendations for restorations of wildlife habitat, a timber harvest, and eradication of invasive species, in addition to other items. As the property is owned by the Town, T. Dufresne will be approaching the Board of Selectmen on Monday, June 4th, about implementing the recommendations made in the management plan. It is thought that the timber harvest will generate enough funds for the first stage of the work to be done, and the HCC will need to provide some funding beyond that. He wanted to get the sense of the HCC members to proceed with the plan to speak to the Board of Selectmen to implement the plan or not.

Some of the recommendations for the property include both the timber harvest and a reclamation of portions of the fields for wildlife habitats. T. Dufresne explained that these fields were, at one time, in active farm production, but it has been 20 +/- years or more since. After the reclamation occurs, any existing fruit bearing trees should be retained or new ones planted to provide sustenance for wildlife. Fields 4 & 5 on the map included with the plan contain invasive plant species, such as bittersweet, multiflora rose, as well as others, and herbicide applications have been recommended. While there might be some NH Fish & Games funding available, J. Oehler felt that applications in years 3 & 5 would cost approximately \$2500 each, and should eradicate the invasives. L. Bianco was concerned that any clearing would provide a better habitat for the invasives to spread; discussion of hand-removal and other alternatives to herbicide briefly discussed. J. Bruneau and T. Dufresne felt that clearing would provide better invasives control once the herbicide applications were completed, as well as providing wildlife habitat. J. Bruneau felt that the property would benefit by a selective cut and field clearing as detailed. P. Edmunds noted that the National Park Services conducts these operations annually in different National Parks, and it is of benefit.

T. Dufresne felt that Jim Oehler is very responsible and respective of the HCC rules and regulations, and has not steered the HCC in the wrong direction. J. Bruneau asked if Jim Oehler could meet with the HCC to discuss the management plan before moving forward; T. Dufresne will contact Jim Oehler to enquire if he can attend the next meeting. L. Bianco felt that a large timber cut would create other issues, and the application of herbicides could potentially cause lasting damage to a clean environment. Some discussion about the standards for herbicide applications and which might be used. P. Edmunds stated that it would be a selective cut, not a clear cut, and would be beneficial to the forest and wildlife. M. Post noted that pollinator plants in the area have significantly declined due to invasives taking over, and the bee population has done the same. The field clearing could allow for pollinator plants to be reintroduced in the area, which, in turn, would have a beneficial effect on local agriculture. T. Dufresne stated that during the Hurricane of 1938, almost all of NH's timber crop was wiped out, and does not believe that any of the forest growth on the property is older than that. It's not old growth, and has not been managed for a number of years. With members having no major objections, T. Dufresne will be presenting to the Board of Selectmen at their June 4th meeting. P. Band requested that information on the proposed herbicide usage be available for the Board of Selectmen meeting, as they will want to be informed.

SUMMER HIKES

In the absence of LeeAnn Wolff, T. Dufresne tabled discussion on this matter. He did make a suggestion about which properties should be considered: the Spaulding Lots off Rocky Pond Road where the timber cut has just recently concluded, the Wright property on South Merrimack Road as an older example of a timber harvest, and the Siergiewicz Farm property where the cut is proposed.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

P. Edmunds motioned to enter into Non-Public session to discuss potential land acquisition under RSA 91-A:3, II (d); seconded by M. Post. T. Dufresne polled the members, all those present voted to enter into Non-Public session by a vote of 9-0-0. The HCC entered into Non-Public Session at 8:11 pm.

177 **RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION**
178 T. Dufresne motioned to conclude the Non-Public session and to keep the minutes sealed until voted by the HCC to
179 release, seconded by M. Post. T. Dufresne polled the members, all members voted to conclude the Non-Public session
180 and keep the minutes sealed by a vote of 9-0-0. The HCC concluded Non-Public Session at 8:45 pm.
181
182 C. Quaine left the meeting at 8:45 pm.
183
184 *Public Session resumed*
185
186 **SUMMER MEETING SCHEDULE**
187 After discussion, members agreed that the July-August meeting schedule shall be:
188 First meeting in July cancelled for the Fourth of July holiday;
189 Second meeting on July 18th will occur as scheduled;
190 First meeting in August, scheduled for August 1st, is cancelled;
191 Second meeting on August 15th will occur as scheduled.
192 Regular meeting schedule will recommence for September. If an additional meeting is necessary in August, it would
193 be scheduled for the end of August, presumably August 29th.
194
195 **MINUTES**
196 T. Dufresne motioned to accept the public minutes of the April 18, 2018 meeting as written; seconded by J. Bruneau.
197 All members in favor, none opposed, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 9-0-0. There was no Non-Public
198 session at this meeting.
199
200 **ADJOURNMENT**
201 J. Bruneau made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by T. Dufresne. All members in favor, none opposed, and
202 the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.
203
204 Respectfully submitted,
205
206 Connie Cain
207 Staff