

HOLLIS CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting

September 7, 2016

Approved September 21, 2016

Present:

Regular Members: Tom Dufresne, David Connor, Thomas Davies, Cathy Hoffman, Mark Post.

Probationary Members: Jon Bruneau, Laura Bianco.

Staff: Connie Cain.

Also Present: Spencer Tate, Meridian Land Services; Kyle Gillis, Hollis Recreation Director.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

HOLLIS RECREATION COMMISSION - Proposed recreation field, Hardy South, Depot Road, MBLU 018-014

S. Tate presented the preliminary plan for the construction of a new recreation practice field on the southern portion of the property known as the Hardy Field; the Town owns the property, but there is a Conservation Easement on the portion north of the stone wall. As the plan calls for a Standard Dredge & Fill permit to be filed with the NH Dept. of Environmental Services (DES), there is no requirement for input or approval by the HCC as in an Expedited Dredge and Fill. The area is presently used as an informal practice area, and have been managed and mowed over the past several years.

The existing soccer field north of the existing parking area was constructed about 15 years ago, and the Recreation Commission has been in need of additional fields for the past 5-8 years. This proposal calls for a second field to be constructed south of the parking area; it will be a raised field with a height of about 3 feet, which will match the existing parking area height. The side slopes will be at a 3:1 grade to address any safety concerns, and the field size is the smallest recommended for a soccer field. S. Tate noted that there is an existing drainage ditch to the west of the field location, presumably constructed by a farmer when the area was in active agricultural use; any water in this ditch flows southerly towards Merrill Lane. The southwesterly corner of the proposed field may become wet in the spring, and the raised construction will prevent water pooling on the field. The wetlands delineations were correct as of June 2016.

T. Dufresne asked what erosion controls will be implemented; standard straw bale or silt fencing will be used.

T. Davies asked about drainage; no drainage is proposed, as it is felt unnecessary. T. Davies further asked about irrigation; it is planned, and will be shown once configured.

Members asked who will be constructing the field; K. Gillis stated that Doug Orde of Hollis Construction has been selected, and will construct the field for the Town.

C. Hoffman asked if any other construction is anticipated, such as for bleachers; K. Gillis stated that no bleachers are proposed or anticipated for this field, just a few benches for team use as indicated on the plan. T. Davies asked about the room for spectators; there is room around the field for spectators to sit/stand. T. Davies asked if the split-rail fence continued southerly past the field to separate the field from Depot Road; yes.

T. Davies asked where the fill is coming from and where being placed; where the fill is coming from has yet to be determined, but will only be used on the field location. There are no modifications planned for the drainage ditch or any other part of the property, just the proposed field. The area of disturbance planned is less than 10,000 square feet.

As this was an informal presentation to the HCC as an interested party, the next step is to file the Standard Dredge & Fill permit with DES, and to meet with the Planning Board. The anticipated construction start will not be until next spring, weather dependent. While there is no requirement to keep the HCC informed as to the progress, it is anticipated that they will be kept up to date on the project via the Planning Board.

Members thanked both K. Gillis and S. Tate for the presentation and their time.

(K. Gillis & S. Tate departed at 7:22 pm.)

STANDARD DREDGE & FILL PERMIT, 237 Hayden Road, MBLU 028-007

As noted previously, the HCC does not provide input or approval on a Standard Dredge & Fill permit submitted to DES. However, as this particular permit involves a possible impact to wetlands and/or buffers, Mark Fougere, Hollis Town Planner, requested that the HCC conduct a site walk and make a recommendation to the Planning Board.

The permit calls for two items:

- 1.) Placement of a seasonal dock in Rocky Pond. This would be similar to others placed on the pond and also on Silver Lake;

2.) Construction of a pathway from the property owner's house to the shoreline. The permit calls for the pathway to be constructed of wood chips/bark and granite curbing at the edges to keep the material within the pathway areas. HCC members conducted a site walk of the property with the owners on August 29, 2016, and found no major issues. However, the HCC recommends that the granite curbing, as proposed for the walkway, not be installed to prevent any unnecessary disturbance to the wetlands and/or wetlands buffer. This recommendation will be forwarded to both DES and to the Planning Board.

ANNUAL PROPERTY MONITORING REPORTS

Chris Kane, Conservation Biologist, has submitted his annual reports for the properties as required; these are the Rideout lots at 010-018 and 015-001 on the Nashua River; 018-001, the Hollis-Brookline High School Conservation Easement (HBHS CE); 042-073, the Gardner Lot on South Merrimack Road; and 043-034, the Glover Lot on Nevins Road.

T. Dufresne noted that the biggest concern is the HBHS CE, the fields keep expanding with no notice or request from the school. Discussion ensued about how to bring forward the HCC concerns that the school is not abiding with the Conservation Easement requirements. He noted that the HCC has been remiss in enforcing the easement requirements as well. He would like to move forward, bring the requirements to the school's attention, and try to work together amicably to resolve the violations.

T. Davies stated that he recently found out there is a new Green Group at the school. He felt that recycling was still an issue that needs to be addressed; the HCC's annual roadside clean-ups continue to bring more carelessly thrown trash from the parking lot than elsewhere in Town. He feels the HCC needs to take an active role in encouraging and educating students and staff, and on vocalizing issues as they are found.

D. Connor suggested posting the monitoring reports at the Old Home Days booth.

T. Davies felt that speaking with the HBHS Athletic Director may bring some awareness to the trash discarded during events and games; he felt that this may open up a dialogue on how the HCC can help with recycling at these events. He felt that the HBHS CE requirements, such as the annual water monitoring should be brought to the Coop School Board's attention to make sure they are aware of the requirements. He felt that the Green Group could assist with this item. T. Dufresne felt that it was better to bring both items directly to the Coop School Board.

T. Davies asked if the HCC can conduct the water monitoring and possibly other items if the Coop School Board refuses; T. Dufresne stated yes, but the HCC will probably not be reimbursed for these items. The baseline levels were established when the HBHS was built, and are on record.

T. Dufresne motioned to approve payment to Chris Kane in the amount of \$1400 for the reports; seconded by C. Hoffman. All members in favor, none opposed, and the motion carried 5-0-0.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Moose Plate Grant Update

LeeAnn Wolff has been working on the application, and it is coming together for submission. T. Dufresne noted that if at least a partial match is offered, the likelihood of being awarded a grant is better.

Joint HCC-Agricultural Commission Work Group Update

M. Post stated that the Work Group has been formed to investigate how to best utilize and manage the agricultural areas on the Stefanowicz Farm property once the Town purchase is completed. J. Bruneau and Mary Jeffery have volunteered to be the HCC representatives to the group, and M. Post anticipates holding the first meeting during the second half of September. The formation of this group has been discussed with the Selectmen, who have approved.

The group will first be gathering information, and reporting findings to both the HCC and the Agricultural Commission, along with the Board of Selectmen. A variety of items must be determined before bids for lease can go out, and there is the possibility that the property will be leased to more than one concern. The need for a warrant article must be investigated, as State Law requires a warrant article for any item to extend for more than 1 year. Records will be kept jointly by both Commissions.

L. Bianco asked if recreational fields were still being proposed for the property, it is unknown at this time, and probably won't be finalized until after the Town purchase is complete.

Old Home Days Update – Thom Davies

T. Davies has received the Vendor List from the Old Home Days Committee (OHD), and there are 6 Conservation minded organizations that have agreed to participate in a Scavenger Hunt type of activity. A card with 2 questions from each organization will be created for public participation, and when completed, each booth will have a bucket for card submissions to be made. At the end of the day, HCC members will pick up the buckets from each organization and randomly select 4 cards as the prize winners.

T. Davies noted that the HCC will need to come up with 2 questions to answer, and he has asked that the questions be those that a 2nd grader can answer, to keep the activity open to all age groups. Participating organizations have been asked to ensure that the answers can be easily found at their booths, and not be difficult to answer. The main focus should be to educate the public on natural resources, the organizations, and what the public can do to help.

Suggestion for one HCC question was made: “What is the next hazardous waste collection date?” As the HCC will have these flyers available at the booth, the answer should be readily available. T. Davies asked members to come up with questions and send to him in the next few days. A coordinator between the organizations is also needed; please let T. Davies know if you can fill this role.

Along with the scavenger hunt, other items will be needed for the booth. Community benefits materials are in the HCC filing cabinets, T. Davies and C. Cain will compile materials. C. Hoffman will be bringing cookies; L. Bianco will coordinate the prizes. T. Davies passed around a booth sign-up sheet; the event generally runs from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Howe Fields Conservation Easement

T. Dufresne updated members on the Conservation Easement plan. At this time, an “Agricultural Land Easement” document has been drafted, and revisions have been made over the past 3 weeks by various parties. T. Dufresne felt that the HCC should review and vote on the final document. Some of the delay has been due to Federal Government requirements in verbiage and uses. When the final document and plan have been submitted, T. Dufresne will bring before the HCC for a vote on the document, plan, and expenditures from the HCC not already approved.

BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

In the absence of Peter Band, there was no Selectmen’s update available. Neither the Planning Board nor the Land Protection Study Committee has held meetings, and the latest Treasurer’s Report had not been received as of meeting time.

MINUTES

C. Hoffman motioned to approve the minutes of August 17, 2016 as written, seconded by T. Dufresne. All members in favor, none opposed, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 5-0-0.

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 5-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Connie Cain
Staff