

# HOLLIS CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting

April 4, 2018

Approved April 18, 2018

Members Present: Tom Dufresne, David Connor, Thomas Davies, LeeAnn Wolff, Cathy Hoffman, Mark Post, Jonathan Bruneau;  
Alternate Members: Laura Bianco, Joseph Connelly, Cheryl Quaine, Paul Edmunds, Karen Bridgeo;  
Board of Selectmen: Peter Band, BOS Liaison;  
Staff: Connie Cain  
Guests & Attendees: Adam Jacobs, Peter Baker

T. Dufresne called the meeting to order at 7:00.

## **TIMBER MANAGEMENT – Adam Jacobs**

Mr. Jacobs wished to have a discussion with the HCC in regards to the protection of older tree growth and trees. He would like to propose a program to designate a tree or a tree grove as either permanently protected from harvesting or as a “Heritage” tree/grove to promote and protect older growth and provide a certain status/protection of individual trees. He had previously been a member of a “Tree Committee” at his former residence in New Jersey, which advocated for and provided protection for older tree growth in that community.

Mr. Jacobs has done research as to the type of protection is afforded to old growths in NH, and did not find any. He stated that he spoke to a NH Forrester, who informed him that, statewide, about 1% of the existing timber growth is harvested annually. With this percentage, approximately every 100 years all existing timber growth has been harvested. Many tree species are just reaching maturity at this age. If a community were to set aside a small number or percentage of trees, and provide some protection against harvesting, it could provide benefits to the forested areas. Diversity is good for forests, old forests have a different eco-system than newer growth and certain processes only occur in older forested areas. An older, undisturbed grove may provide some protection from infestation or other environmental factors, and research has indicated that it may protect against climate change effects on the individual trees. He felt that Hollis would be a good place for such a program, given the amount of publicly protected land. He could find no Town ordinance specifically addressing tree protection, but if there is one, he’d like to see it utilized. Some of the methodology to be used, from identifying trees to how they would be identified, was discussed. Mr. Jacobs suggested that a survey be done of publicly controlled land prior to a timber harvest, or if some older growth areas are known, that these trees or areas be designated in the near future.

T. Dufresne explained that the HCC has been in the process of creating management plans for their properties, with a number of plans created annually, depending on available funds. The management plans are created by a local biologist and forester who are very reputable and have extensive knowledge of the properties, the local area, and NH State Laws. The HCC has a due diligence process that must be gone through and the main goal is to properly protect land already under HCC management. T. Davies noted that there is a significant amount of older pine growth on the Hildreth Conservation properties. Due to public and Town intervention, these two properties were able to be purchased to protect and preserve that older growth. D. Connor asked how the HCC management plans incorporate protection of these older growth areas. T. Dufresne did not think has come up in any of the more recently created plans, but this can be addressed at the time of the plan creation; he also noted that Craig Birch has stated that most mills are no longer set up to handle larger, older growth trees anymore as they do not normally see that size logs come in. Due to this, the older and larger trees get left on the job site. T. Davies felt that the older trees deserve consideration for protection. P. Band noted that 100 years ago, there were no large tree groves in Hollis, most of the land was devoted to agricultural use and had been cleared. L. Wolff asked if any attempt to identify any such trees or groves had been done to date; Mr. Jacobs is aware of some areas within the Town Forest. L. Wolff asked what vision or steps would he like to see happen if any trees or groves are identified? Mr. Jacobs felt that any such trees or groves could be tagged as “Heritage” trees and be located by GPS so they are not accidentally harvested. M. Post & T. Dufresne thought that any such trees on Town owned properties could be tagged; on privately held land it would be up to owner to allow. L. Bianco felt this was a good discussion, and the HCC should plan to allow some areas on its properties to become older growth. P. Edmunds suggested speaking with Craig Birch about identifying a number of trees to preserve; P. Baker felt that C. Birch would know where the older growth areas are in Town. L. Wolff asked what mapping mechanisms are available so that the data does not get lost. HCC members felt that the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) or the Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF) may be able to provide some recommendations. D. Connor felt that the number of trees to be designated as “Heritage” or protected needs to be determined before moving into the mapping phase. Mr. Jacobs stated that a number should be determined, which can be used as a “foundation” for

the program. L. Bianco felt that the main priority is that trees are allowed to age from newer to older; P. Edmunds felt having C. Birch involved in the discussion should be step one. L. Wolff felt that focus should be on what area(s) to leave as old growth and identify this area via a management plan. Beaver Brook Association (BBA) could possibly work in conjunction with the HCC to create an older tree growth area. Any area identified could be designated a "no cut" or "heritage site." Discussion of different types of maps that could be utilized for identifiers. L. Wolff suggested that other communities be contacted to see if they had implemented any similar type of plan or ordinance. Mr. Jacobs said he had researched, and could not find one in the immediate area. L. Wolff will contact NRPC to see if there had been any previous studies done, and if the data was available.

Members thanked Mr. Jacobs for his suggestion, and will research further to see if viable. Mr. Jacobs left the meeting at 7:45 pm.

## **BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES**

### *BOARD OF SELECTMEN – Peter Band*

P. Band announced that during the USDA-NRCS internal review of the Howe Fields Conservation Easement, it had been found that the NRCS Representative had made an error on the extension date parameters. Due to this error, the conditions for the Grant were not met, and the anticipated Grant fund payment returned to the USDA. Bottom line is that there will be no matching Grant Funds coming from the NRCS for the purchase of the Conservation Easement, and this was at no fault of the Town or the property owner. Without these funds, the Town cannot purchase the Conservation Easement, as the original Warrant Article was specific as to where the purchase funds would be coming from.

P. Edmunds stated that the owner and Town could reapply for Grant funds, with the first opportunity to do so in 2019. Some discussion of the property and issues that came up were discussed. After discussion, some HCC members felt that too much had already been invested in the property and the process to let go without trying again.

### *PLANNING BOARD – Cathy Hoffman*

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 17, 2018. Prior to the meeting, there will a site walk at 3 Winterberry Way, off of Ranger Rd for a proposed farm stand, beginning at 5:00 pm. HCC members are welcome to attend, although she does not think there are any conservation related issues with the site.

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

The last meeting was held on Thursday, March 15, 2018. Members are proud of the NH contingent for their efforts in procuring approval for the NH portion of the Nissitissit River from Hollis, Brookline and Nashua communities. The Massachusetts portions will be going to Town vote in the near future, and the NH members will be assisting their Mass peers in getting the approvals in those communities.

P. Baker asked why the approval process took so long; L. Wolff, T. Dufresne and P. Band jointly responded that there had been some confusion in the beginning of what NH organizations should be approached. The Committee had originally approached the Board of Selectmen, who were not made cognizant of all the implications. The HCC should have been contacted, and were not until last fall.

### *HCC-AG WORKGROUP SUBCOMMITTEE – Mark Post*

M. Post informed members that with the recent failure of Warrant Article 2 at Town Meeting for purchase of the Siergiewicz Field on South Merrimack Road, the Selectmen requested a 2-year agricultural lease for the Stefanowicz Farm property until a decision is reached on the proposed Recreation Fields. The 2017 1-year lease will be revised to 2-years for 2018, and will be available to bidders in the near future. The Workgroup will be discussing the same with the BOS on April 16, 2018, and would like to give the Selectmen the draft RFP and Lease document for the longer lease for future use. The documents were in the final stages of completion prior to Town Meeting.

There was no updated Treasurers Report available at meeting time.

P. Baker left the meeting at 8:09 pm.

## **NON-PUBLIC SESSION**

T. Dufresne motioned to enter into Non-Public session to discuss a potential land acquisition under RSA 91-A:3, II (d); seconded by T. Davies. T. Dufresne polled the members, all those present voted to enter into Non-Public session by a vote of 12-0-0. The HCC entered into Non-Public Session at 8:10 pm.

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**RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION**

P. Edmunds motioned to conclude the Non-Public session and to keep the minutes sealed until voted by the HCC to release, seconded by T. Dufresne. T. Dufresne polled the members, all members voted to conclude the Non-Public session and keep the minutes sealed by a vote of 12-0-0. The HCC concluded Non-Public Session at 8:35 pm.

**PUBLIC SESSION CONTINUED**

After some discussion, T. Dufresne motioned to convene a Site Walk, with a minimum of members, on the property discussed in Non-Public session on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018 with the time to be determined (TBD); seconded by L. Wolff. All members in favor, none opposed, and the site walk will be held on May 12, 2018. T. Dufresne and/or P. Edmunds will contact the property owner to set up the time.

**ANNUAL ROADSIDE CLEAN-UP**

After review of the Town Calendar and some discussion, T. Dufresne motioned that the Annual Roadside Clean-up be held on Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm, with participants to sign-in at the Transfer Station; seconded by L. Wolff. All in favor, none opposed, and the motion carried by a vote of 12-0-0.

T. Davies noted that Beaver Brook Association is holding their barn sale on the same date, and he will not be available for the Roadside Clean-up. He will be able to assist as needed prior to the event. T. Dufresne informed members that Hollis Police Chief Joseph Hoebeke has a list of potential volunteers, and that Joan Cudworth of the Transfer Station has ordered and received additional bags for the event.

L. Wolff stated that the event signs are in bad shape, and need to be replaced; T. Davies will research cost and purchasing, L. Wolff will design the new signs.

L. Wolff motioned to provide \$200 as the budget for the event; seconded by T. Davies. All members in favor, none opposed, and the budget of \$200 was approved 12-0-0.

L. Wolff asked for a volunteer to contact the Hollis Public Access Channel; after discussion, it was felt that notifications on the Hollis-Brookline Facebook page would probably be easier to notify the public of the event, C. Quaine and J. Connelly will post to the Hollis-Brookline page. K. Bridgeo also suggested contacting the area National Honor Society for possible volunteers. C. Cain will advise the email list after L. Wolff provides the email content.

This event will be further discussed at the April 18, 2018 HCC Meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Election of HCC Officers for 2018 will be held at the April 18, 2018 meeting.

**MINUTES**

T. Dufresne motioned to accept the public minutes of the March 21, 2018 meeting as written; seconded by L. Bianco. All members in favor, none opposed, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 12-0-0. There was no Non-Public session at this meeting.

C. Cain noted that the March 7, 2018 meeting had been cancelled due to a snowstorm that night.

**ADJOURNMENT**

T. Dufresne made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by M. Post. All members in favor, none opposed, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
  
Connie Cain  
Staff