

HOLLIS CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of Public Meeting

September 4, 2019

Approved September 18, 2019

Regular Members: Tom Dufresne, LeeAnn Wolff, Thomas Davies, Mark Post, Jonathan Bruneau
Alternate Members: Laura Bianco, Paul Edmunds, Cheryl Quaine
Staff: Connie Cain
Guest: Anna Birch

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

Joint HCC & Agricultural Commission Workgroup – Mark Post

M. Post relayed that a site walk with the new NRC District Conservationist, Michael Birchler, has been scheduled for the agricultural assessment; the assessment will identify areas of concern and create a map identifying the agricultural fields to be leased.

One of the main concerns for the workgroup is the wetlands area towards the southern boundary, and they may need feedback from the HCC. NRC felt that the wetlands and buffer should not be included in the lease area. M. Post asked if the HCC wanted to have the wetlands and buffer marked. T. Dufresne noted that wetlands and buffer areas will need to be determined by a Soils Scientist. Consensus after some discussion was to wait until the NRC assessment and recommendation was available. As there will be a fee for hiring the Soils Scientist, it was decided to make a motion to expend funds.

T. Dufresne made the motion to expend up to \$4900 to hire a Soil Scientist to delineate the wetlands and buffer on the southern section of the Stefanowicz Farm; seconded by P. Edmunds. All in favor, none opposed or abstained, and the motion to expend funds was approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

Treasurer's Report – Thom Davies

As of the end of August 2019, there was an account balance of \$545,267.98; with \$10,000 in stewardship reserve, this leaves an available balance of \$535,267.98. T. Dufresne noted that the Ernest Hardy Lot on Baxter Road closed in the past month, and \$450,000 was expended for that purchase.

There were no Selectboard or Planning Board updates available at meeting time.

NEW/CONTINUING BUSINESS

Ernest Hardy Lot on Baxter Road Baseline Report

T. Dufresne noted that the baseline report had been generated and emailed to members. As the Town Forest will be managing the property, the baseline report was created by Craig Birch. This should be done on all future land purchases or easements. C. Quaine asked if this should be shared with the public at Old Home Days; L. Bianco agreed, as an example of how HCC funds are expended.

Birch Hill Properties

At the present time, uses for these properties are still be determined. T. Dufresne would like to recommend to the Selectboard that a third party Land Trust, such as Nichols-Smith Land Trust or the Piscataquog Land Conservancy, be engaged to monitor the property to avoid any potential issues. The Town would be responsible for creating the management plan for the properties and which Land Trust to "hire", the Land Trust would then monitor and report on any potential issues found. The Selectboard would need to approve this method of managing the properties, and there would be some cost involved to cover the Land Trusts costs, but T. Dufresne stated, this is usually for a 25 + year commitment between the Land Trust and the Town.

Anna Birch asked if the Land Trust would hold a conservation easement; T. Dufresne has seen them work with and without an easement. The management plan for the properties would be the enforcement document for the Land Trust, and they would inspect the property and report any potential issues to the Town. It would then be up to the Town to address any issues. Having a Land Trust act in this manner adds another layer of protection for the property.

59 *T. Dufresne made the motion to recommend to the Selectboard to secure third party oversight of the Birch Hill*
60 *properties as discussed; seconded by J. Bruneau. All in favor, none opposed or abstained, and the motion to*
61 *recommend to the Selectboard was approved by a vote of 8-0-0.*
62

63 T. Dufresne has received bills from Bentley Property Management for the installation of one gate, and the repair of
64 another on the Birch Hill properties as approved at the June 20, 2018 HCC Meeting. This leaves one additional gate to be
65 installed under this approval.
66

67 **OLD HOME DAYS**

68 Various ideas were presented as the main focus for the booth, with this year's display being the Ernest Hardy Lot
69 purchase. Maps, trails, parking areas, and other features of the property will be highlighted as part of the display on how
70 the HCC spends taxpayer funds to protect and conserve properties in Town for the public good. Members volunteered for
71 various assignments and booth times.
72

73 *P. Edmunds motioned to expend funds of up to \$300.00 to cover the printing and supply costs for the Old Home Day*
74 *HCC booth displays; seconded by T. Dufresne. All in favor, none opposed or abstained, and the motion to expend was*
75 *approved by a vote of 8-0-0.*
76

77 **MINUTES**

78
79 *T. Dufresne made the motion to accept the public minutes of the August 21, 2019 meeting as written; seconded by*
80 *T. Davies. All members voted in favor, none opposed or abstained, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 8-0-*
81 *0.*
82

83 *T. Dufresne made the motion to accept the non-public minutes of the August 21, 2019 meeting as written; seconded*
84 *by T. Davies. All members voted in favor, none opposed or abstained, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 8-*
85 *0-0.*
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87 **ADJOURNMENT**

88 *T. Dufresne made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by M. Post. All members voted in favor, none opposed*
89 *or abstained, and the motion carried by a vote of 8-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.*
90

91 Respectfully submitted,
92 Connie Cain
93 Staff