

HOLLIS CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of Public Meeting

March 3, 2021

Approved March 17, 2021

Regular Members: Tom Dufresne, Thomas Davies, Jonathan Bruneau, Mark Post, Paul Edmunds
Alternate Members: Joe Connelly, Laura Bianco, Karen Bridgeo, James Plummer, David Werner.
BOS Ex-Officio: Peter Band
Staff: Connie Cain
Flint Pond Improvement Association: Daniel Gerke, President; David Connor, Member
Public: Joseph Garruba

THIS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED VIRTUALLY WITHOUT A PHYSICAL LOCATION IN COMPLIANCE WITH GOVERNOR SUNUNU'S EMERGENCY ORDERS #12, 16, & 17.

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.

FLINT POND IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

The Flint Pond Improvement Association (FPIA), represented by D. Gerke, President, and D. Connor, had requested to meet with the HCC to discuss an upcoming herbicide application, and to ask for financial assistance with funding. D. Gerke explained that Flint Pond is not a private pond, but is open to and used by the community and others beyond Hollis. In the 1990's, the invasive species growth was bad, in the 2000's, it was worse. In 2013, an herbicide treatment was done and "floating islands" removed from the pond, and hand-pulling of invasives since then has been able to keep some of the vegetation at bay. Amy Smagula of the NH Dept. of Environmental Services (DRA) has recommended another herbicide treatment as hand-pulling cannot handle the milfoil invasion. The area of the herbicide application is approximately 9 acres, and shown on the provided map. Some of the application sites include Town-owned properties. (Note: The FPIA emailed a presentation to members, a copy is attached to the physical minutes. CC)

D. Gerke continued, stating that the total cost for the herbicide treatment is \$13,140.00. The FPIA has received a DES Grant in the amount of \$6796.00, of which \$5256.00 will be used on the herbicide application. The FPIA is requesting \$7884.00 from the HCC to cover the remaining herbicide application costs. In addition to the herbicide treatment, the FPIA will cover variable costs to include 3-days of labor for professional divers, estimated at \$2310.

T. Davies asked about the herbicide to be used; D. Gerke responded that Procellacor™ from SePRO Corporation is to be used, and has a low impact. T. Dufresne stated that Cheryl Quaine had reviewed the documentation, and she felt it is about as safe as you can get. T. Davies asked about the efficacy; supposedly this is better than the herbicides that have been used in the past. D. Gerke stated there would not be any hydroraking as had been done in 2013.

P. Edmunds asked if the plants would be left in the water after the application; yes. T. Davies asked if it was safe to assume that herbicide applications would not be done more frequently; D. Gerke stated that 5-8 years is the estimated time span between applications. K. Bridgeo asked if hand-pulling would continue; D. Gerke stated yes. T. Davies asked if DES would continue to fund invasive removal; at this time, it is unknown. Grant award amounts vary year to year, and the grant funds would only be available if DES continues the program.

T. Davies stated that he does not want the HCC to fund these projects indefinitely. He is aware that the pond is shallow, and sunlight, animal waste, and other environmental factors impact the pond. D. Connor stated that the pond had not always been shallow; in 1937, the average depth of the pond was 33 feet. After the Hurricane of 1938, the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), working with the State of New Hampshire, placed logs in the Flint Pond bed, and raised the level to the 3.5 +/- average depth that it is today. In the 2010's, prior to the hydroraking project, the ACE felt that the value of the timber to be high. However, due to naturally occurring arsenic in the area, any of the logs removed from the pond bed would have to be placed in a capped hazardous waste fill, and the timber value is now negligible. This meant that the removal of the logs was not worth the cost, and the project was abandoned. As the logs are legally the property of the State, they can't be removed without permission. D. Connor stated that without the log placement, the pond would not have the issues due to the shallow bed. T. Davies felt it might be in the best interest of all to meet and determine the HCC's continued involvement, the HCC may not have funds available in the future.

P. Edmunds asked if the DES was contributing 40%, and the HCC 60%, what is the FPIA contributing? D. Gerke stated that the amount asked for was for the herbicide application only. The FPIA is covering the variable annual costs, which include

3 days of dive teams to remove vegetation and other costs. Between the herbicide treatment, divers, and other associated costs, the total costs are \$16,990. The FPIA is only asking for assistance with the herbicide treatment, the other costs are covered by the DES and FPIA. D. Gerke explained that not all Flint Pond residents contribute to the FPIA; P. Band felt that the Town would find these requests more palatable if all the FPIA members contributed. D. Gerke stated there are about 14 members presently, they are always trying to manage the funds they do have to cover multi-year costs. J. Connelly felt that the FPIA covering 25% of the total costs and their time should show their "skin in the game" or investment in the pond.

T. Davies asked if the Town or HCC had membership in the FPIA as owners of Flint Pond property; no, but the HCC can become a member, dues are \$10 annually. A brief discussion of the Town properties and location on the pond occurred. J. Bruneau stated that he likes that the history of the pond was provided, and asked if the ACE could be approached to provide funds or other services to address some of the issues. D. Gerke & D. Connor stated that they have been asked this question, they felt that an attorney would need to be hired. The FPIA does not have the funds for this, and it could lead to a hardship for some owners to impose a fee. J. Bruneau felt that a letter to the Jurisdictional Manager of the ACE may be enough to engage them in the process. Depending on the response, costs to the FPIA may be minimal.

P. Band suggested that US Senators Maggie Hassan and Jeanne Shaheen be contacted; both Senators have been very proactive and the Town has had successful negotiations with a variety of items with their assistance. P. Band was aware that clean-up from the Hurricane of 1938 continued until the end of 1941 when the country became involved in World War II. T. Dufresne suggested that the HCC join the FPIA if there was no legal deterrent.

T. Dufresne motioned to expend \$7884.00, as requested by the FPIA, for the 2021 proposed Flint Pond herbicide treatment, seconded by J. Connelly. T. Davies requested modification of the motion to read "up to \$8000." After brief discussion, the request was withdrawn, and the original motion was brought forward for a vote. Members voted unanimously in favor, none opposed or abstained, and the motion carried 9-0-0.

(J. Garruba "entered" the Zoom meeting at 7:26 pm.)

D. Connor will submit a check request to C. Cain for payment. D. Gerke and D. Connor left the meeting at 7:29 pm.

BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – Peter Band

P. Band informed the HCC on the following:

- 1.) Town Meeting has been postponed to May 15, 2021, to allow for the meeting to be held outside, due to COVID-19.
- 2.) Finance Officer Rachael Gosselin has given her notice; her last day will be March 19, 2021.
- 3.) The Selectboard would like to meet with the HCC to discuss plans on how funds in the HCC account will be used. He anticipates this meeting will be scheduled for a date after Town Meeting.

TREASURERS REPORT – Thomas Davies

As of February 28, 2021, the HCC account balance was \$1,177,223.60. With the \$10,000 in legal stewardship reserve, this leaves \$1,167,223.60 available as cash.

NEW/CONTINUING BUSINESS

2021 Petition Warrant Articles 16 & 17

P. Edmunds discussed these Warrant Articles (WA) with Town Atty. Christopher Drescher, and Atty. Drescher could not find any legal language that specifically prohibited or allowed target shooting on Town-owned property, but felt the language in WA 16 was more precise. WA 17 is vague as to its requirements, and Atty. Drescher felt it could be open to interpretation.

T. Davies asked the HCC to take a stance on the two WA's; T. Dufresne said the HCC had voted on it last year. After some further discussion, C. Cain stated that the vote had taken place at the January 15, 2020 meeting, and suggested that members review this discussion prior to any further action.

D. Werner had several questions: For those properties on which the Town holds Conservation Easements, if the WA's pass, would they apply to those properties as well? If yes, would that include target shooting? If the Conservation Easement did not contain any such language, could target shooting be added. T. Davies felt that the Town Attorney should be consulted. D. Werner felt that it may be misleading to assume that Town Conservation Easements were not subject to

120 this. T. Dufresne suggested that all members review the January 15, 2020 meeting minutes, and be prepared to discuss at
121 the March 17, 2021 meeting.

122
123 (L. Bianco “entered” the Zoom meeting at 7:51 pm, and explained that she had been listening since 7:30 +/- pm via the
124 telephone line, as she had had difficulty entering the meeting. C. Cain will inform Dawn Desaulniers, IT Director.)

125
126 J. Garruba opined that the HCC should avoid taking a stance on the WA’s from a political perspective. He would like to
127 request that the HCC not take a vote on this matter. T. Davies felt that the HCC should take a vote to show that they support
128 the public’s recreational use of the properties without having to worry about safety. A brief discussion continued.

129 130 **Hillsborough Co. Conservation Commission Plant Sale**

131 T. Dufresne had emailed the plant sale order form to members. He had also been approached by Selectman Paul
132 Armstrong to request the HCC’s involvement in a Town Common Tree Project, this had been emailed to members. T.
133 Dufresne felt that the project could involve soil testing to determine why the trees on the Common are dying; he suspects
134 highway salt use may be a factor. J. Bruneau suggested contacting Adam Jacobs for his involvement, due to his interest in
135 preserving old forest growth areas. T. Davies noted that P. Armstrong had also contacted him, due to his involvement
136 with Beaver Book Association. T. Davies felt that a restriction on certain properties may be needed for old growth
137 protection, and grant funds may be available to assist in the cost. The Hildreth Conservation properties and the Gardner
138 Conservation Easement property were two discussed as suitable candidates. L. Bianco felt that if property owners would
139 not allow their properties to be clear-cut, there could be some land set aside for old growth protection.

140 141 **Hollis Mapping**

142 K. Bridgeo had spoken with Sara Siskavich, Assistant Director, GIS/IT Programs Manager, at the Nashua Regional Planning
143 Commission (NRPC) recently to discuss creating maps of Hollis, showing the present house lots and those that might be
144 developed at Town Buildout. S. Siskavich and K. Bridgeo discussed the maps, costs, and reasons for map creation. If the
145 data to be included is fairly simple, there should be no cost to create. S. Siskavich also provided K. Bridgeo with some
146 examples of recent NRPC projects, including one for the Town of Amherst, highlighting properties which do not meet
147 Current Use program requirements for acreage, but may be valuable as Conservation property.

148
149 K. Bridgeo stated, based on discussions at previous HCC meetings, the primary idea was to have something available at
150 Town Meeting for public education and discussion; the face of Hollis is changing, but the message needs to be worded
151 carefully. The map should provide specific data points, and she would like members to think about these and be prepared
152 to discuss in the near future. J. Connelly felt the map would be a valuable visual presentation; T. Davies felt showing open
153 space in Hollis would be a reason to create the map. A discussion occurred, with a variety of reasons proffered, such as
154 Rural Character, competing against developers to protect high visibility land, and previous survey results.

155
156 K. Bridgeo asked if a member could rework the calculations done about 20 years ago to show how protecting land impacts
157 property taxes. An infographic based on the facts would be helpful. J. Connelly asked if J. Garruba could resend his Land
158 Use Change Tax presentation from last year; J. Garruba will resend.

159
160 T. Dufresne stated that members should be prepared to discuss further at the next meeting; as Town Meeting has been
161 scheduled for May 15th, there may still be time to collaborate on this project.

162 163 **FPIA Membership**

164 J. Connelly asked if a vote needed to be taken for the HCC to become a FPIA member; yes. J. Connelly volunteered to be
165 the HCC representative for the FPIA.

166
167 *T. Dufresne made the motion to submit a membership application to the FPIA on behalf of the HCC, and to approve*
168 *the expenditure of \$10.00 for annual dues; seconded by T. Davies. All members voted in favor, none opposed or*
169 *abstained, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 10-0-0.*

170
171 L. Bianco asked for a recap of the Flint Pond discussion, as she was unable to connect to the meeting. A discussion occurred
172 on the matter.

173 174 **MINUTES**

175 *T. Dufresne made the motion to accept the public minutes of the February 3, 2021 meeting as written; seconded by*
176 *P. Edmunds. All members voted in favor, none opposed or abstained, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 10-*
177 *0-0.*

179 *T. Dufresne made the motion to accept the non-public minutes of the February 3, 2021 meeting as revised and to*
180 *keep them sealed until voted to release; seconded by J. Bruneau. All members voted in favor, none opposed or*
181 *abstained, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 10-0-0.*

182
183 *T. Dufresne made the motion to accept the public minutes of the February 17, 2021 meeting as written; seconded by*
184 *P. Edmunds. All members voted in favor, none opposed or abstained, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 10-*
185 *0-0.*

186
187 **ADJOURNMENT**

188 *T. Dufresne motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by J. Plummer All members in favor, none opposed, and the*
189 *motion carried by a vote of 10-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.*

190
191 Respectfully submitted,
192 Connie Cain
193 Staff