

Stefanowicz Homestead-Discussion Timeline

2016

2.8.16 BOS Public Hearing-

David Connor, Vice Chairman of the Conservation Commission focused on the conservation value of the property, reviewing the most important items based on the town survey. Those items include preservation of Hollis farming heritage, preservation of town rural character, public recreation access, conservation of area wildlife habitat and protection of water resources. The property is 192.6 acres on the eastern side of town, on the corners of Nartoff Rd. and Pine Hill Rd. Of the total proposed acreage, 1.39 acres is a separate lot with buildings which the town would need to decide the appropriate action to address it. The other parcel is open space, partially used as farmland. The total appraised value of the property is \$2,525,000. The parcels combined would allow for approximately 35-37 house lots under a Hollis Open Space Planned Development. The property consists of approximately 140 acres of forest land, including pine and hardwood timber, and approximately 40 acres of active farm land. Approximately 30 acres are locally important soils depending on the type of crops. The property provides potential for expansion of farming and if the town purchases the land, they could lease it to the local farmers. Mr. Connor added that the open fields could allow public access to trails and forest areas. Since the property has existing Town conservation lands on either side, this property would unite the two areas together.

The question was asked whether the house parcel, which is 1.39 acres, was included in the purchase, which the answer was yes. The house parcel appraised for \$225,000 and the town would have the option of selling it, using it, leasing it, etc.

3.12.16 Town Meeting minutes-

ARTICLE 4 – Bond for Land Acquisition-Stefanowicz Properties

Passage of this article shall override the 10 percent limitation imposed on this appropriation due to the non-recommendation of the budget committee. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,550,000.00 (gross budget) to acquire full ownership interest to certain tracts or parcels of land, together with any buildings thereon, in the Town of Hollis more particularly specified below, on such terms and conditions as determined by the Board of Selectmen, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$2,550,000.00 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); also, to authorize the Board of Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon. The Selectmen are hereby also authorized to apply for and accept gifts, grants or other forms of assistance, if any, in order to offset the raising and appropriating of the funds referenced above. The intended uses are for agricultural husbandry, timber management, land conservation, passive recreation and potential athletic fields for Town of Hollis residents, and other such uses as to be identified by the Board of Selectmen. The certain tracts or parcels of land which are to be purchased with the above appropriations are known collectively as the Stefanowicz Properties and, more particularly, include the following:

Stefanowicz Properties

Tract(s) or Parcel(s) of Land Size (Approximate)

M/L 32-01 185.84

M/L 32-02 1.39

187.23 acres

This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, III and will not lapse until the purpose for which the appropriation is made shall be completed. (2/3rd ballot vote required).

Recommended by Selectmen NOT Recommended by Budget Committee

Motion to bring Article 4 to the floor by Vahrij Manoukian Second by Peter Band
 Motion by David Sacks to move question Seconded by consent Carried by Hand Count
 BALLOT VOTE: YES-805 NO-169 CARRIED

4.6.16 Conservation Meeting-

T. Dufresne stated that the HCC needs to provide, to the Board of Selectmen, a recommendation on the proposed future use of the buildings. At this time, he sees the options as: 1.) Resell; 2.) Rental; 3.) Town use; or 4.) Demolition. P. Band felt that the Selectmen would not want to rent the property out due to complexity and liability. Members felt the existing pole barn could be utilized by whoever farms the property. T. Dufresne stated that he does not need a decision now, but would like members to be prepared to vote at the next meeting.

4.20.16 Conservation Meeting-

At the last meeting, T. Dufresne asked members to be prepared to make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen on the disposition of the existing house.

M. Post – he did not feel that renting the property would be in the Town’s best interest, due to liability and other issues associated with renting to a private party. He felt the Town should either sell or determine if the house or the site could be used by other Town organizations, such as the Heritage Commission for reconstruction of the Cooper Shop and/or other buildings in storage, or by the Recreation Commission for equipment storage, etc.

L. Wolff – agreed that the property should not be rented. Sale would be preferred, but if the house and lot does not sell, then demolish the house. T. Davies – felt that the house would be difficult to sell if practice fields surrounded the house. He also felt that selling the house could be problematic if sold to persons who did not maintain the house and the property, and felt that the value of the surrounding conservation land would not be taken into consideration if the Town chose to sell. He felt that demolishing the house was the best option.

T. Dufresne – As the HCC usually buys land or easements, it was also recommended, by Peter Baker, that an environmental study also be conducted on the house lot in addition to the larger land parcel; T. Dufresne agrees with this recommendation as the future of the house lot site is undecided. He also agreed with M. Post’s recommendation that the Town explore possible uses by other Boards/Committees; the building could also be used for restroom facilities. Kyle Gillis stated that the Recreation Commission would need to provide that, and possibly a concession stand as well. The house could possibly fill those requirements, as well as providing storage area.

P. Baker – felt that the Town could possibly consolidate the two lots into one if the house was to be demolished, or if to be sold, the Town could submit a lot line relocation plan for the house lot to make it a 2acre conforming house lot. This would provide some buffer between the house and potential recreation fields. The existing barns on the larger land lot could be utilized by whoever leases the farmland, or be demolished if not needed.

C. Hoffman – agreed with P. Baker’s suggestion of lot line relocation if the house and lot are to be sold. M. Jeffery – would like to investigate possible use by other Town Boards/Committees before making recommendation.

Based on the above comments, T. Dufresne will create a list of recommendations for the Board of Selectmen, and email the draft to members before submitting.

5.4.16 Conservation Meeting-

Stefanowicz Property: T. Dufresne informed HCC members that he would be talking to the Board of Selectmen regarding the Stefanowicz property. There are several options regarding the house and lot and there is also the potential to use a portion of the land for recreation fields. The house and lot could be sold, as is or taken down. Another option would be to relocate the lot line to make the current non-conforming lot a full conforming two-

acre lot. L. Bianca stated that she was not necessarily in favor of using this land for recreation fields. Her main concern is maintaining the rural character of Hollis. She was also concerned that not enough information regarding these land purchases was getting out to the public. T. Dufresne stated that the Selectmen would be making the final decision regarding the use of the property and disposition of the house.

7.20.16 Conservation Meeting-

*Peter Band-*At the last Board of Selectmen's meeting, the Board discussed the disposition of the Stefanowicz house on Nartoff Road, which is part of the farm purchase. The Board voted that the house should be sold as originally presented. P. Baker asked if a real estate agent or other method of sale has been determined yet; this will not be decided until after the property purchase is completed.

9.8.16 Agricultural Commission Meeting-

T. Hardy recommended that if acquired by the town and then resold, the purchase and sale for the house on the property should include an provision to restrict complaints for agricultural activity on the surrounding town owned land

12.12.16 BOS approved P&S Agreement

12.28.16 Survey was completed

(Below is from Assist. To the Assessor)

At the time of the 2015 Town Meeting, as Warrant Article #4, the property acreage listed was estimated, based on the best known information from Mr. Stefanowicz at that time as no formal survey could be found. If I am remembering correctly, the survey was not yet complete at time of Town meeting. It was also believed that the house and 1.39 +/- acres of land had been formally subdivided at the time that the house was built ca 1956.

At some point after the Warrant Article was approved, the survey was completed (Plan #39209, dated 12-28-2016). During the course of discovery for the property survey, Randy Haight, of Meridian Land Services Inc., found the following:

- 1.) The house lot and the 1.39 +/- acres had not been formally subdivided as previously believed;*
- 2.) The property consisted of two lots, of which the house and any outbuildings were included in the southernmost of the two lots.*

The survey was recorded as the Plan # given above, and corrected the acreages to those shown today.

As of today, and in accordance with the approved survey, the properties purchased by the Town are known as: 032-001, Nartoff Rd, consisting of vacant land of 143 acres; 032-002, 126 Nartoff Rd, consisting of the house, outbuildings, and land of 53 acres.

The combined total acreage of the properties is 196 acres, and the Map/Block numbers did not change. The Warrant Article states 187.23 acres, so the property purchased includes an additional 8.77 acres. This is the same that is shown in the online assessing database and in my Assessing software system.

As to the "subdivision" of the house lot, prior to the survey being completed, it was always intended that the "house lot" would be sold to recoup some of the funds that were used for the purchase. However, once it was found that the house lot had never been formally subdivided, it then became the Selectmen's decision to subdivide the lot, as the Warrant Article this year intended to do. I don't know if the information to sell the "house lot" was included in the presentation to purchase at the 2015 Town Meeting, I believe it was, but I know it had been discussed repeatedly before the purchase and after.

2017

3.17.17 BOS close on property

3.31.17 Ag./Con. Commission Working Group Meeting-

D. Harmon stated that at some point this year, the agricultural lease bid packet will be available, and there will be at least one public information meeting to discuss the leased area, in addition to a possible site visit with potential bidders. M. Post stated that all the information gleaned, to date, should become part of the bid packet. G. Bianco asked if anyone had considered the potential impact that having a recreational area would have on the house lot on the property, or did they feel it was not of concern; M. Post stated that the existing house lot on the property had been thought of as a separate lot, and it wasn't discovered until recently that no subdivision had been formally created or recorded. The workgroup was not making any recommendations on the future use of that portion of the property, just the agricultural lease. M. Post thought that the Town had recently conducted a site visit, but he was not privy to any information gathered on the visit. (Staff Note: The site inspection was delayed due to weather conditions. CC) (There was some paper shuffling/rustling, and I couldn't hear what was being said for a few moments. CC) Should the BOS decide to sell the house, they must create a subdivision to break the house off as a separate lot. No decisions have been made by the BOS to date.

9.25.17 Ag./Con. Commission Working Group Meeting-

D. Harmon asked if a decision on the future use of the house had been decided to date; C. Cain responded that she believed the BOS was waiting to determine if the Recreational Fields, if approved, could use the structure, but at the last known discussion, the BOS had recommended that it be demolished. The previous plan to sell the house and land had been put on hold due to boundary issues.

11.2.17 Ag./Con. Commission Working Group Meeting-

Discussion of leased area ensued; there is no real definition for the long-term lease area. Members asked about the status of the existing house; unknown to date. Members felt that excluding a 2-acre parcel for the house and well, etc., from the lease agreement would be an option with no known plans for the house. Wetland areas were also discussed; members will need to determine what can or cannot be done on these areas. An approved National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) plan will be required from the winning bidder; Heather Foley will be involved in the plan's creation. Discussion of NRCS plan requirements, the plan will be based on the property; members reviewed some of the requirements. It was felt that the plan recommendation will be part of the final lease agreement, with time parameters for completion in the lease. It is important to document the property at the commencement of the lease, in addition to making the property potentially eligible for future Federal grant funding. D. Harmon noted that the Woodmont lease contains a clause dealing specifically with NRCS compliance. An example of the NRCS plan will be included in the bid packet.

D. Harmon stated that the public access to the property may need to be restructured. The Woodmont lease places this decision up to the BOS, but with new federal laws in place for 2018, some access to agricultural areas may need to be restricted to the public during sensitive times of the year, and the Town should be prepared for this.

Members felt that the items previously discussed (and listed above) must be addressed, as well as the lease area; the plans for the house lot, and a recommendation on the future of the house lot, from the workgroup, should be made to the BOS. Could Heather Foley at the NRCS weigh in on the house lot recommendation? D. Harmon suggested asking local farmers for their opinion and what the house might be used for if included in the lease area. M. Post would also like to see the Agricultural Commission make a recommendation on the house and a suggested use.

House and lot. Members will work on the lease assuming that the house will remain, but M. Post will contact the BOS to see if any decision has been made.

11.20.17 Ag./Con. Commission Working Group Meeting-

Agricultural Use Assessment – no substantive changes felt necessary, but future use of the house and site may impact the agricultural use of the property. J. Bruneau felt that agricultural and public access may become a major issue, as the main access to leased area is via the driveway to the house. It was also unknown if a change in access would alter the NRCS' plan for the property. Discussion of field locations and NRCS reports. The Hollis Trail Commission had previously stated that they feel there is not much public use of the property; members disagreed and stated that public use has been witnessed many times. M. Post thought that a plot plan for the property, illustrating the potential public access points, be included as part of the house site recommendation to be provided to the BOS. Members may also want to touch base with Laura Bianco of the HCC for further input as she lives across street from house. J. Bruneau and D. Harmon will work on a plot plan.

PLOT PLAN

D. Harmon discussed the plot plans for the property; he wanted to make sure that members understand the land and features a little better. On a plot plan he presented, Nartoff Road and the property boundaries are shown, the farm house area is also delineated, and some of the abutting properties. Soil quality is shown as certain zones and colors on the map; agricultural soils and slopes are further delineated and defined. Discussion of areas and soil types. J. Bruneau asked if map would be part of RFP packet; D. Harmon said it will be included in bid packet as part of agricultural assessment. J. Bruneau asked if any more map information will be included; no. Bidders can go NRPC's website to obtain aerial map copies, and the USDA also has soil survey maps on their website. J. Bruneau concerned that bidders may not know that information is available, felt links should be included. D. Harmon stated that bidders are required to have their plans reviewed by the NRCS prior to bid submission; he felt that all this would be reviewed prior to Town submission and review.

Survey has been completed prior to the transfer to the Town. J. Bruneau is still attempting to obtain GPS data from Meridian Land Services, but this has not been forthcoming. Discussion of previous site visit made by J. Bruneau and D. Harmon; a logging road had been found that could potentially provide access for lessee. Further review and discussion of maps and aerial photographs commenced. M. Post had recently been made aware of possible maple trees outside of delineated farm lease area; HCC will have to review and approve tapping use of that area before any further consideration can be given. M. Post will discuss with Tom Dufresne, HCC Chair. J. Bruneau felt already discussed at HCC Meeting; thought discussion outcome was that lines and other equipment would limit public access and for this reason, would not be allowed. Some additional discussion about maple syrup tapping in forested area and location(s); M. Post will also discuss with potential bidder for more detailed plans and locations.

D. Harmon also reviewed the house lot area to determine if a conforming lot could be subdivided to include the house and a suitable house lot. Based on maps, it appears that the land which the house is sited upon contains agriculturally poor soil and is sloped in the house lot area. Using the stone wall to the south of the house and the power line easement to the north as potential boundaries, he was able to establish a potential house lot. Using these boundaries, the house lot area would comprise of approximately 4.5 +/- acres. If the BOS were to authorize the subdivision, and sale of the house lot, would the farmer lessee be able to co-exist with the home owner? With a lot of this size, it should allay any concerns on the matter. D. Harmon felt that this could be presented to HCC and BOS for further review. Discussion of wetlands in that section and possible inclusion with the house lot.

D. Harmon what are the legal steps to create a conforming house lot. J. Bruneau felt as long as the proposed lot meets the Town requirements for acreage, frontage, etc., the lot should be approved. J. Bruneau will speak to Cathy Hoffman at next HCC meeting for further information. House lots must meet the existing minimum requirements, but can be larger than the minimum. M. Post had heard that there was some interest in moving the riding ring from Nichols Field to this property; no further details are available at this time. The BOS will need to determine what uses will occur on the lot, whether it be recreational, agricultural, conservation, or a combination of all three, along with a determination on the fate of the house. C. Quaine felt it would be

important to find out if horse activity on the property would impact farming or water quality; the HCC and/or BOS will need to investigate the impact. Further discussion of potential uses other than agriculture. D. Harmon would like to have answers sooner rather than later. D. Harmon further noted that if the BOS decide to sell the house, road access for the lease area and public access would have to be provided. J. Bruneau stated there are two other access points south of discussed location. This will need to be investigated further depending on the BOS decision. D. Harmon would like to investigate having a separate house lease and see if anyone interested. M. Post stated that he is almost positive that the Selectmen having no interest in leasing house out,

12.14.17 Ag./Con. Commission Working Group Meeting-

D. Harmon stated that the Stefanowicz site walk had not yet occurred, due to schedule changes. The main reason for this site walk is to determine where a specific corner is along the northern boundary with the Lavoie Farm. Some discussion about which plan is the correct plan; is there a need for a new survey to be done; and how would the new survey be paid for if necessary. Consensus was that a new survey plan is probably not necessary, although J. Bruneau related that Meridian Land Services Inc., who created the most recent survey, has been unable to provide the GPS coordinates supposedly taken as part of the survey. The site walk was rescheduled to Saturday, December 16, 2017, with attendees to meet at the house at 126 Nartoff Rd at 10:00 am. As no Conservation Commission (HCC) funds were used for the property purchase, the HCC may not want to pay for a new survey.

LEASE AREA

M. Post stated that Atty. Drescher had requested that the lease area be defined as soon as possible. As far as the lease area is concerned, the disposition of the house is still to be decided. At the last HCC meeting, M. Post had brought the matter up. P. Band stated that the Town does not want to become a landlord, so leasing the house is not an option. It was felt that there were 2 options available to the Town:

Sell the house and a conforming lot of land. This would require a subdivision plan to be approved.
Define the legal house lot, and do not include in the lease agreement.

Discussion ensued of the legal requirements to sell the house, such as can it be sold "as is?" Members felt that is could be, but would need legal determination from Atty. Drescher. The fate of the house is to be decided by the Board of Selectmen; M. Post felt that regardless of the Town's decision, it does not affect the lease area. At the last Agricultural Commission (AG) meeting, M. Post and D. Harmon had spoken to Selectman David Petry, who felt it would take some time to accomplish to how the house will be disposed, whether by sale or other methods. C, Cain felt that should the Selectmen decide to sell the house, it would require a majority vote at the annual Town meeting. D. Harmon will acquire a larger copy of the property survey for ease in review. The final lease area should be decided at the next meeting.

2018

3.26.18 BOS agree to spend funds for a property assessment

9.10.18 Budget Committee Meeting-

T.J. asked for the status of the house on the Stefanowicz Property. M.L. stated that it is being maintained by the DPW and there is no intention to sell it at this time. He added that studies are underway to determine the best use of the property.

10.9.18 Budget Committee Meeting-

When asked why there is electricity at the Stefanowicz Property, M.L. replied that there is a house on the property that requires heating for basic maintenance.

2019

2.11.19 BOS Meeting-

Article 17 – Subdivision of Homestead Structure and Lot-Chairman Le Doux explained that an individual has expressed interest in potentially purchasing the house located on the Stefanowicz property and wanted to put the proposed warrant article before the Board, for consideration. He thought it may be of significant benefit to identify how the town can convert it into a 2 acre lot or what the selectmen feel is appropriate, then having it assessed, then doing a sealed bid process to see if someone would like to acquire it. M. Le Doux spoke with Tom Dufresne, Conservation Commission Chair, Tom Gehan, Budget Committee Chair and Bill Drescher, Legal Counsel for the Town, about the proposed warrant article.

The town acquired the land, fee simple and research began to determine the best use of the property. Several groups were a part of that analysis including but not limited to Recreation Commission, Trails Committee, Agricultural Commission and Conservation Commission. Original discussions about the property, included the option of segregating the house and selling it or possibly using the house for storage for the town. Funds from the potential sale of house and lot, which is approximately \$200,000-\$300,000, could be applied to the principal reduction for the acquisition. It was stated that the minimum lot size is 2 acres.

The Selectmen intend to discuss the property in greater detail with the Planning Board, but first wanted to determine if there was a desire to move forward with the opportunity to potentially sell the house and lot. The Selectmen were in favor of the warrant article and wanted to include language referencing that the house would be sold, “as is” without further warranties or exceptions. The town does not intend on doing any repairs or replacements or maintaining the property in any way.

M. Le Doux suggested that the Selectmen discuss the proposed warrant article again in further detail at the February 25, 2019 Selectmen meeting.

2.25.19 BOS Meeting-

Proposed Warrant Article 17 – Subdivision of Homestead Structure and Lot

ARTICLE 17 – Subdivision of Homestead Structure and Lot

To see if the Town will authorize the Board of Selectmen to take all necessary steps to survey and obtain applicable authorization from the Town of Hollis Planning Board to subdivide the Stefanowicz property, acquired by the Town pursuant to authorization given by the passage of Article 4 at the March 12th, 2016 annual meeting. The authorization to subdivide shall be limited to creating a lot not to exceed five (5) acres (the 'house lot') which would include the existing homestead and appurtenant structures in order to facilitate the sale of said homestead structure and lot and to further authorize the Board to take all steps necessary to enter into any agreements and execute any documents necessary to carry out said sale on such terms and conditions as the Board of Selectmen, in their sole judgment, determine.

The town intends to obtain invitations to bid for the property, and will publicize accordingly. The 2019 property assessment is estimated to be \$313,600.

The language in the proposed warrant article states, “*The authorization to subdivide shall be limited to creating a lot not to exceed five (5) acres...*” It was suggested that the Selectmen include this language so the town could take all of the out buildings into consideration. The actual lot size may be more like 3.1 acres with an easement. The board does not contemplate two lots, just one. The intent is to package the property as a single family residence, not to be further subdivided.

The area to the south of the house includes both the well and the septic system area along with some wetlands that were not to be part of the lease area. Since the well and septic are in this part of the lot, the Selectmen

wanted to ensure adequate acreage was included in the language for the warrant article, for easement purposes.

3.16.19 Town Meeting-

ARTICLE 17 – Subdivision of Homestead Structure and Lot

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