

**Minutes for the Regular Meeting of the
Walpole Conservation Commission (via Zoom)
February 1, 2021**

Members Present: Alicia Flammia, Lewis Shelley, , Steven Dumont, Laura Hayes, France Menk, Jackie Kensen, Cheryl Mayberry (Selectboard Liason), Peggy Pschirrer (Selectboard Member), Jean Kobeski (Secretary)

Members Absent: John Peska

Alternate Present: Peter Palmiotto

Visitors: Alex Barrett

Call to Order: Alicia called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Steven moved, Laura seconded, and all voted by roll call to accept the December 7, 2020, minutes.

Public Business

Treasury: Forestry Account - \$30,820.44
Conservation - \$142,753.04
Walker Road - \$3,363.90
Mason (non-expendable) \$19,029
Mason (expendable) \$454,015.22

Report from the Chair: Alicia stated that numerous volunteers responded to the WCC email set up by Steven. He has a list of the volunteers and will post it on the WCC Google Drive.

Correspondence: Alicia reported she received covid information from the NH Charitable Foundation and newsletters from the Monadnock Conservancy and NHDES Supply Lines.

Alicia also received an email from Marilou Blaine regarding the downed oak on the Mill Pond trail along with a suggestion to host walking adventures for seniors. Alicia forwarded this idea to Helen Dalbeck of the Hooper Institute and Michael Nerrie of Distant Hill Gardens. Both expressed interest; Laura is on the board of both organizations and will encourage collaboration between them.

New Business

Update on Town Forests: Alex Barrett made reference to material he sent to the WCC on 11/3/2020. Included was a summary of rapid assessments along with a recommendation to start thinking about foresting in Fanny Mason.

Alex talked about harvesting in Watershed Forest, thinking about the health of the pine trees. He recently went out and took core samples of 6 trees. He took diameters and counted the rings and reported that they haven't been growing for 30 years. He sent pictures of the samples to Alicia. He stated that the pine trees are not improving; they are not dying but also not growing. Moving forward he said the Watershed hardwoods are coming on strong and invasives (especially in the Hooper Forest) should be monitored.

In regard to Fanny Mason, Alex said he would resend his 11/3 report and proposal to the membership. Peter stated he was reading the report but wanted to know where a map of the full property can be found. He recommended looking at the full property so they carve out areas they don't want to

harvest. He also stated that trail expansion should be considered in any harvesting plan. Alex stated he would graph out the area and work with the WCC to map it out. Lew said he would share trail maps he's been working on and Peter said student maps and data can be included.

Steven stated it is time to move on this. Plan the management of these forests and do it carefully. Fanny Mason is a good start. Lew and Peter will share data and can work with Alex. Alex said he would get together with Lew and Peter then send around a plan.

Laura asked Alex when they would need to get started, if this work takes a few months to do. He said if they give the go-ahead by April, and certainly no later than the fall of 2021, contractors can be approached for work in the winter of 2022.

Land Use Change Tax - Map 21 Lots 25 and 26: Alicia referred to the letter from Avitar, which she forwarded to the membership, then stated that the WCC will be receiving the full \$25,000 from LUCT this year for land preservation.

Mill Pond Trail: Lew reported that the Mill Pond Trail is back! He and Peter took care of the downed tree in two hours and needed chains to do it. Cheryl reminded Lew to submit receipts for the chains.

Dam Relicensing: Alicia stated there is a YouTube video from the CRC on the relicensing of the Wilder, Bellows Falls, and Vernon dams. She also said she would invite Kathy Urffer to attend the WCC April meeting to make a presentation on this topic.

Old Business

Public Forum: The public forum has been tabled for the time being. Alicia will email Maureen when the group is ready to proceed with it. Alicia said she would collect the comment box from the library.

Trail Maps: The membership agreed to ask Rick Brackett of the Monadnock Conservancy to create the maps. Lew can give him the data. He has data from the Mill Pond. A sample can be made then a template created.

A town-wide map accompanied by blow-up maps (8 1/2 x 11) of key trails was discussed. Steven suggested labeling maps with length of trail, difficulty, allowed uses, permission for dogs, and Leave No Trace. France suggested printing the maps on waterproof paper and charging \$5, perhaps as a fundraiser.

Lew showed the members a trail sign he made and said that he has several others. After they are painted, they can be put up.

Other Business:

Trail Maintenance Subcommittee Report: Steven said last month's meeting was well attended. The group narrowed down trails they would like to map. The committee discussed having two maintenance days each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. They felt training sessions on trail cleaning and trail maintenance would be beneficial. They also suggested having an Adopt-A-Trail program. Steven said some families have already volunteered.

The committee suggested walking each trail a few times per month and cleaning up, if necessary. Reports of trees down or washouts could be emailed to the committee and a group could go out and take care of the problem.

Steven said he got tools from Lew and they are being kept in a backpack donated by Lew and Kris Shelley. The tools cost \$65.78.

Reservoir Dam: Peggy reported that modeling was done and the dam was designated high risk. The selectboard is now looking at next step. Peggy said they now need to do modeling for the Mill Pond.

Soil Samples: Cheryl reported the USGS is coming to do soil samples near Fanny Mason, checking for contaminants. Peggy signed the approval.

Invasive Species Seminar: France asked if there is course reimbursement for the NH Extension Service invasive species seminar. Reimbursement was approved by a roll call vote of the membership.

Other Topics: France offered to help with any artwork needed for maps, etc. Lew stated the commission should create a logo. It would be good to have for any print materials, especially maps, linking them to Walpole.

Steven stated that conservation maps need to be edited and additions sent to Antioch. Laura wondered if there was any software that would enable her to do the editing, but none was named. Steven said he saw some changes that need to be made, so he will put them in an email to Laura and Peter by next meeting.

Steven reported there would be another blazing trip in the next few months.

Steven feels the commission needs to discuss wetland buffers in the conservation plan.

In reference to the WCC website, Alicia was in contact with Kelli, who is trying to work with Ryan.

There was a brief discussion about the conservation land spreadsheet and what properties need to be monitored. Jackie stated there are four properties to be walked, and this has been done by Jackie. Lew stated he feels this should be done by a subcommittee so the work doesn't fall to one person. He also stated that meetings could be streamlined by brief reports by subcommittees, such as the Walpole Gateway, Wetlands buffer, and Easement. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Adjournment: France moved, Jackie seconded, and all voted by roll call to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

The next Zoom meeting is Monday, March 1, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Kobeski, Recording Secretary

*** These minutes are in draft form until approved by the Commission on March 1, 2021.