

**Minutes for the Regular Meeting of the
Walpole Conservation Commission
October 4, 2021**

Members Present: Alicia Flammia (Chair), John Peska, France Menk, Laura Hayes, Steven Dumont, Peter Palmiotto

Members Absent: Lewis Shelley

Seating of Alternates: Kara Dexter

Visitors Present: Cheryl Mayberry (Selectboard Liason), Peggy Pschirrer (Selectboard), Jean Kobeski, Recording Secretary

Call to Order: Alicia called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall, first floor and via Zoom. This meeting was being recorded.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Prior to the meeting Kara suggested a spelling correction and two typing errors on page two of the September minutes. Peter moved to accept the September 13 minutes with those earlier corrections. John seconded. All voted to accept the minutes as amended.

Public Business

Treasury: Conservation \$154,290.00
Forestry \$30,656.00
Walker Road \$3,078.00

Correspondence: Alicia received a notice of the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC) annual meeting online on November 6. Kara asked what is done at the annual meeting. Alicia explained that there is a keynote speaker in addition to several conferences on topics of interest to conservation commissions. Alicia stated there is money in the budget for members who wish to attend. It can be paid in advance or members can be reimbursed. Kara expressed interest so Alicia said she would forward the information to her.

Alicia received dues notification from the NHACC. She said that is usually paid in January so she will wait to do that.

Alicia stated she received a Notification of Violation in North Walpole for some work that is being done there. The Department of Environmental Services has asked for written comments about the violation within 20 days. Cheryl stated the property is behind Lentex. They were cutting without a permit and went over the property line.

Alicia received a phone call from a woman who lives on the Cold River and is losing frontage because of all the high water events. Alicia advised her to get in touch with DES to possibly come for a site visit. The woman wants to put down riprap. Alicia told her she needs a permit from the state to do that. She knew she needed one but didn't know much about permitting.

Alicia asked if there is currently a Cold River Local Advisory Commission contact. John stated that Gary Speed is a member of that group and would be an excellent contact for the Cold River resident. Alicia stated she would ask Gary to follow up with this resident.

Cheryl cited an earlier letter from a conservation engineer from USDA-NRCS to the resident making suggestions of what she could do. Laura stated their program is very strict, and though she may not prove eligible for help from them, there are other programs that might be able to help her. Cheryl stated the engineer said they would be happy to visit the site to make stabilization recommendations. Laura reminded Alicia that, if the woman wants to do the riprap, she needs to contact the state for the permit.

Old Business

Walpole Gateway: Alicia received a proposal from Alex Barrett for assessment of the property and the Community Walk-About with a question and answer session. The field work would be done by mid-October and the Community Walk could be in late October or early November. The total visit cost is \$780. John said it is a very reasonable price and could set a cornerstone for any future discussions as well as provide good ideas for usage of the land.

Laura expressed concern that the proposal lacks information about permitting with the state. Because Alex is a forester, he may not be the person to deal with permitting with regard to regulated rivers. Alicia discussed this with Alex. He said he would research permitting and make recommendations. Alicia said she could ask him for a permitting matrix, if the proposal is approved. Laura said it is a great proposal as stands, but they need to keep in mind that they may need someone else to handle permits for wetland-type issues. Steven said he has some experience with those types of permits, but it depends on what they are planning to do. He proposed leaving that out for now.

Alicia said she asked Alex for some mapping. She said they could look at Alex's recommendations, and once they have specific development options, they can focus on permitting needed.

John and Laura agreed that the proposal is a good one, and Peter added that the public Walk-About is particularly good because that has been requested and could answer many of the questions they have been asked. France stated that Matt has done this type of work a lot, and depending on what happens tonight, she could call him and ask him to make contact with Alex. Alicia said she would also notify Distant Hill about the plans for the community walk.

John moved to approve the Long View proposal; France seconded, and all voted in favor. Alicia signed the proposal.

Cheryl raised a question about the gate. Will it be unlocked? Peggy reported she had another complaint from kayakers about the locked gate. Peter reminded the group about the last discussion they had about the gate. He said it was suggested that, if they open the gate, they should just take it down. There is access around the gate. Perhaps they could have Alex bring people into the conversation about this during the Walk-About.

A discussion of the pros and cons of opening the gate ensued. At the last WCC meeting, France moved that the gate be unlocked. No one seconded the motion. There was not a quorum to vote on the proposal.

Steven suggested waiting until they have the Walk-About with Alex before unlocking the gate. Laura agreed, stating that they should have solid information from Alex before unlocking the gate and possibly having the public drive down the trail. Steven suggested reaching out to the people who have voiced complaints at Town Hall to invite them to the Walk-About.

France asked how this Walk-About will be advertised. She offered to make flyers and post them

everywhere, in addition to online postings.

Alicia asked if the members want to take a vote tonight about unlocking the gate. Kara suggested waiting to hear what Alex has to say. John agreed. At this point Laura asked the members of the Selectboard if they could refer complaints directly to the WCC, either in writing or by attending a monthly meeting.

Concerns were expressed about the original intent of the Gateway, whether it is recreational or environmental (preserving natural resources). Peter said they are in a good place to get this assessment then come to a compromise as to future uses. Peter told Alicia he would send her copies of all the paperwork involved in the original grantwriting effort, which focused on the preservation of natural resources, so she can pass it on to Alex.

Alicia reminded the Selectboard members that the WCC manages a great deal of land in town, which has been under - assessed. Over the last year the rapid assessments of the major forests in town have been completed so the WCC is getting a better handle on their properties, including Walker Road. She pointed out that Walker Road is the most unique property with a host of conservation issues the town has every had. Hopefully with Alex's assessment, they will get answers to many of the questions people have had.

Steven moved that the motion to open the gate be delayed until the November meeting. France seconded. All voted in favor of delaying the vote until November.

Rapid Assessments: Cheryl asked if any action has been taken on any of the rapid assessments that were done. Alicia said plans have been made to log Fanny Mason Forest. She said she sent the rapid assessment of the Hooper land to the Selectboard. Work there has been slow due to the need to address invasive species before harvesting can take place. Peggy stated that it has been a long time since the land was harvested, and the Hooper would benefit from the money from such a harvest. Alicia said Alex was adamant that an invasive management program be put in place before logging. Otherwise they would end up with an invasives forest. Alicia will send Peggy the harvesting timeline chart from the forester so she can present it to the Selectboard. Peter explained that, if they make the Hooper harvest a priority, they will have to schedule it when the invasive species are fully leafed out. Most are in the springtime; Japanese knotweed is in the fall. So the harvest could happen as soon as next summer. He suggested giving Alex the greenlight to move forward. It can be done in conjunction with the Fanny Mason Forest.

Alicia wants to revisit the Long View recommendations at the next meeting. Steven suggested that every month or two, Alex come to a meeting for a check-in.

Other Business

Monitoring Town Properties: Alicia asked who would like to take over Jackie's job of monitoring three of the town properties. Kara expressed an interest but would need to be shown what to do. France is doing Fanny Mason. Steven suggested creating a spreadsheet of properties that need to be monitored along with a sign-up sheet. He suggested that each member sign up to monitor at least one property each year. Steven offered to make the spreadsheet.

Alicia explained that the Monadnock Conservancy holds 13 easements. She said she has the paperwork to monitor these but needs help doing so. Kara offered to work with her.

Walpole Trail Subcommittee: No report

Trail Clean-up: Jeff Harrington has done a great deal of clean up of the Mill Pond Trail. Steven, Lew and Kara continued the work, though it is not finished. Steven and Lew plan to walk the Fall Mountain Trail to GPS the route for maps.

Trail Maps: Steven reported that France finished the back of the maps. France recognized Kara, Wendy, and Will for their help proofreading her work.

Reservoir Dam: The meeting with the Dam Bureau Chief took place on September 23. They visited the Mill Pond and Reservoir Dam. John expects the written report in about 30 days. There is a lot of state interest in the dam, and John said the ultimate designation will remain a Significant Hazard. Peter said when it comes time to make a decision of whether or not to keep the dam, a public hearing should be held. They should be thoughtful about how they handle this and take it very seriously because of the potential hazard to the downtown area.

Peter brought the map of the conservation land to the meeting. Alicia asked if they could have 50 11"x17" maps made. Peter said he could do that and will send a new invoice.

Cheryl wants to display the map on the first floor of Town Hall. It was decided that it would be hung in the space where the giant check now hangs. They will give the map to Sarah to hang.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

The next hybrid meeting will be Monday, November 1, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall and on Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Kobeski, Recording Secretary

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

