

**Minutes for the Regular Meeting of the
Walpole Conservation Commission
November 1, 2021**

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

Members Absent: John Peska

Seating of Alternates: Kara Dexter

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

Call to Order: Alicia called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. in Town Hall, first floor and via Zoom. This meeting was being recorded.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Kara corrected two typos on page two of the October 4 minutes. She also stated that France made a motion to unlock the gate at Walker Road at the August, rather than September meeting, as stated in the October minutes. With those corrections, Laura moved to accept the October 4 minutes. Peter seconded. All voted to accept the minutes as amended.

Public Business

Treasury: Alicia does not have the treasury figures tonight. They will be emailed.

Correspondence: Alicia received a request from the Trustees of the Hooper Trust that the WCC deal with invasive species in the Hooper Forest as soon as possible so that they might begin harvesting red pines next summer. They stated the cost of removing invasives and harvest will come from earnings from selling the red pine. They would also support harvesting any other trees for which there is a market. Alicia stated she would hold discussion about this until they get to New Business on the agenda.

Planning and Land use Regulation manuals are available to purchase. She said the Commission does not usually use the manuals in their meetings so it probably does not make sense to buy one. She stated the Planning Board has a copy.

New Business

Alicia stated that she would like to know prior to meeting day if anyone would like to have a Zoom link to the next meeting.

Nelson Town Forest: Monadnock Conservancy went out to the Nelson Town Forest and did their easement monitoring in October. There is a question about the house across from French and Derry Hill Road. There is trash on the north border of the town forest. Alicia was asked if the Commission could speak with the homeowner about removing the trash. Laura knows the homeowner but suggested that maybe Gary Speed would be the best person to speak to him. She said this has been an ongoing problem. Alicia does not know if the WCC has executory interest in that property. She said it would be best to reach out to Richard Pendleton of the Monadnock Conservancy to ask for next step action on this issue. Laura agreed to contact him.

Peggy said the Conservancy could write a letter to the homeowner, as they often do, in cases like this. Kara asked for clarification of the issue. It was explained that trash has spilled over from the home-

owner's property onto town forest land. Lew asked how it is usually dealt with. Laura stated that if the Conservancy has executory interest on this property, it is their responsibility. But it also depends on how the easement is written. Peggy stated that the homeowner might respond to a letter by cleaning up the trash, not realizing it sits over the boundary. On the other hand, the issue could end up in court. Lew asked if this is a matter for police. Alicia answered that, unless it is something that is hazardous and should not be out in the open, police do not handle this type of situation. Lew suggested taking photos of the area in question to pass around; Laura said she would do that.

Hooper Forest: Alicia referred back to the letter from the Trustees of the Hooper Trust about clearing invasive species in the Hooper Forest, as recommended by Long View. Laura said she has spoken with Alex Barrett, the Long View Forester, about this. He hesitates to estimate what a harvest of the red pines would bring because he hasn't done a full inventory of the forest. The red pines are straight but do not have much value. Alicia said she would look in WCC files for an inventory done by a former forester. Laura stated Alex would appreciate seeing that.

Cheryl said that it would be good to get started on the invasive species so they could harvest as soon as the inventory and management plans are complete. Alicia suggested that the plan could be drawn up during the wintertime and they could schedule a harvest for next summer. Laura stated Alex would attend an upcoming Commission meeting to discuss all of this, if invited. Laura made a motion to approve funding for Alex to do a full inventory and management plan. The inventory would include his plan for invasives. Lew seconded and all voted in favor. The motion passed. Alicia will invite Alex to the next meeting.

Old Business

Walpole Gateway Walk-About: The WCC will host a community walk-about with Alex Barrett and Tom Groves at the Walpole Gateway on November 13 at 11:00 a.m. Maureen Jenkins will be present to facilitate the event with Alex. She will lead a question and answer session following the walk.

Alicia asked for help planning this event. Steven will put an announcement on Facebook. An announcement will be sent to the Walpolean and Ray Boas for the Clarion online. Lew will make signs to put around the community. Laura will bake cookies.

Gateway Property Report: Alicia asked if everyone had read the report from Alex Barrett that she emailed to the membership. Laura said she really liked the idea of making a canoe or kayak carrier to leave on site. Steven said he would make the report available on Facebook.

Vote on the Gateway Gate: Lew felt that they should delay the vote until after the walk-about. France agreed. It was general consensus that they wait until the December meeting to take a vote on whether or not to unlock the gate at Walker Road.

France stated she contacted Matt Tarr about the walk-about. He is unavailable that day but suggested inviting Matt Kelly, Cheshire County extension forester. France has emailed him but has not heard back yet.

Review of current responses to Long View Rapid Assessment Recommendations:

1. Fanny Mason - treating invasives and planning a timber harvest
2. Hooper Forest- just discussed
3. Reservoir Forest- culvert to be repaired by the snowmobile club

Peter recommended that whoever is doing the culvert work should follow NH and VT Best

Management Practices. Lew said he would get the manual to those doing the work. Laura also suggested that they clean up the old culvert when they are finished.

Alicia asked how often the group would like to revisit these recommendations. It was agreed that it was not necessary to do it monthly but it should be done every few months. Alicia stated they would revisit them at the March meeting.

Walpole Trail Subcommittee: Steven sent everyone a copy of the trail maps. Alicia asked if they are being printed. Peter suggested it be done on waterproof paper. Steven offered to contact printers and get costs for the next meeting.

Lew stated that if people request topographical maps, they can be made.

Lew reported that on Saturday, November 6, at 9:00 a.m. they will be doing GPS tracking of the Table Rock Trail. They will meet at the North Walpole School and either walk or drive up to the trailhead.

Reservoir Road: The dam was officially classified a high hazard dam. Fuss and O'Neill have more work to do before the future of the dam can be decided. Lew asked if removal is still an option. Peggy said it is and removal is almost as expensive as repairing it. Cheryl said public input will be needed so Peggy said public hearings will be held.

Kara reported reading in the Zoning Board minutes about the Japanese Knotweed in the Hodgkins Gravel Pit. She asked if this is of interest to the WCC and what could be done about it. Alicia said they are interested but cannot do anything because it is on private property. The Zoning Board has made recommendations because they have governance over the gravel pit. A discussion followed about the spread and possible treatment of knotweed. Steven added it is here to stay.

Peter reported that the streetlights on the common have been changed in accordance with the Dark Skies Initiative. He also asked if the final report on the study of trees on the common has come out. Cheryl said it has not but they have recommended that Liberty Utilities work in collaboration with Arbor Climb when pruning.

Lew reminded the WCC that trail season is winding down and there is property monitoring to do. Steven will create the sign-up sheet and have it at the next meeting. Alicia wants to add this to the monthly agenda.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

The next meeting will be Monday, December 6, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall. Notify Alicia if you would like a Zoom link to this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Kobeski, Recording Secretary

*** These minutes are in draft form until approved at the December 6 meeting.

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

