

**Minutes for the Regular Meeting of the
Walpole Conservation Commission
February 7, 2022**

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

Members Absent: Laura Hayes

Alternates Present: Kara Dexter

Visitors Present: Cheryl Mayberry (Selectboard Liaison), Will and Wendy Grossman, Jean Kobeski (Recording Secretary)

Call to Order: Alicia called the meeting to order at 7:15 via Zoom. This meeting was being recorded.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Steven moved to accept the January 3 minutes as written. John seconded, and by a roll call, all voted to accept the January 3 minutes.

Public Business

Correspondences: Alicia reported that the Selectboard received a letter from Samantha Locke stating her interest in becoming an alternate on the Walpole Conservation Commission. Alicia outlined her memberships in local environmental organizations and endorsed Samantha for the Commission. Steven said she would be a great addition. Cheryl asked if her letter of interest was directed to the Commission; Alicia said it was addressed to the Selectboard. Alicia will notify Sarah Downing of the Conservation Commission's endorsement so this position can be approved by the Selectboard.

Wendy asked how the Commission advertises vacancies for alternates in this organization. Alicia said Sarah Downing sends notices to the Clarion and other local publications when there are openings. Cheryl stated openings are posted in the Town Report, and they are discussed in Commission meetings.

Alicia received a statement from The NH Charitable Foundation regarding the Hubbard Fund check for \$11,515.48.

The Commission received a letter from the Wildlife Heritage Foundation, a fundraising arm for NH Fish and Game. It requested money. Alicia stated the Commission has never been a member of this organization.

The commission received two items from the Monadnock Conservancy. First, in addition to a request for money, they announced the completion of a new park in Winchester, the Winchester Learning Center Community Nature Park with a variety of children's activities. Lew stated he worked on this project.

The Conservancy sent the electronic Landowner Questionnaire to be filled out. Alicia tabled discussion of this until easement monitoring was discussed later in the meeting.

Treasury Report: Mason Non-Expendable Trust: \$20,296.26
Mason Expendable Trust: \$477,650.93

Alicia did not have other balances tonight: she will email them when she receives them from the new town treasurer.

New Business

Aerial Photos in the Basement: Vicki Gohl inquired about the aerial photos of the town, which are behind the Commission's file cabinet. She asked the Commission's permission to frame and hang them, if they belong to the organization. No one at the meeting knew who owned them, so they are available. Lew suggested they might be out of date, but Alicia stated they are historical maps. No one at the meeting knows who owns the maps, so Alicia will pass that on to Vicki.

Old Business

Walpole Gateway Action Plan: Peter emailed a copy of his action plan for the gateway to the membership prior to this meeting. He stated the document is written as an action plan, which could then evolve into the management plan with input from the members. The goal is to make decisions now so they can get folks down there in the spring. He said what he wrote is his opinion based on what has been discussed in meetings thus far.

This document is in draft form.

The focus of the discussion tonight was parking. Peter asked if they wanted a delineated parking area. He suggested doing it in one of three ways:

1. Mow an area to delineate parking spaces.
2. Mow the area and border it with a split rail fence.
3. Delineate a parking area by putting down Surepak - no fence needed

In addition, where should the parking area be located, and how big should it be?

Peter suggested locating the parking area in one of three places:

1. South of the kiosk
2. In front of the kiosk
3. Seek agreement with vet clinic to park in existing lot

France favored his first suggestion because it seems like a natural place to park. It is also where people park now. Kara said she also see cars parked on Walker Road.

Wendy told the group that if they want to develop a parking area that includes part of the Rail Trail corridor, they will need permission from the Bureau of Trails. It is important to know the exact boundaries of the Rail Trail. She said the Rail Trail includes more property than just the trail itself. Alicia agreed. She said they need a formal survey of the property, if there isn't one already. That would show the Rail Trail easement. Perhaps Chuck Shaw or Ray Boas have a survey or pictures. Peter said he would pursue this. Wendy said she has some maps of the Rail Trail corridor that she would send Alicia.

Alicia said by mowing an area, you are are creating implied parking spots. She said Tom Murray suggested removing the logs that are there, and if you do, you have your parking area. She said it looks like a formal survey will be needed to know exact boundaries. Even if they just mow to delineate parking, they can't block any of the Rail Trail. Wendy said that because the culvert is out now, people who are walking the Rail Trail have to walk in part on Walker Road.

Alicia stated they will need a formal survey in order to mark boundaries; Lew and Peter agreed. Peter said that, as a town-owned forest, they do not want to cut corners on this.

Peter asked if the Commission would at least like to mow an area for this spring. Steven asked if there were people who said they would mow. Alicia stated Christian Gowdy offered to do it when he was down there, but she said that was only once or twice during the season. Chuck Shaw said he would mow around the kiosk. Peter said they would talk to Chuck about this. Peter again asked where they would want to mow. France reiterated that near the kiosk is the natural place to park. Peter then asked how big they want the area. How many cars? France suggested six; Lew said that is a typical size for a place like this. Peter suggested five. Steven said the more space you set up, the more people who might come. Some people who walk the Rail Trail may park there. Lew reminded the group that it is a drop off spot for boats, and they need to accommodate those cars.

John asked Wendy if the Rail Trail area has been surveyed by the Bureau of Trails. She is not certain. Maps she has may have been survey maps but they would be from many years ago.

Peter led a brief discussion of a recreational drop-off. It was stated that a turn-around needs to be in a solid area. Peter suggested going down and putting in stakes. Alicia said they could ask that a survey include shoreline protection setbacks. Lew asked if the floodplain area would prohibit a Surepak parking area. Steven said they couldn't do anything within 50' of the high water mark, which would be shown in a survey. John reminded the group that Mark Houghton offered to Surepak a turnaround area.

Steven said a few more parking spaces could be created on the north side of the kiosk, with overflow possibly parking at the vet clinic. John said they need to inform Chuck of their plans and get his OK to accept overflow parking, if necessary. Wendy said that, if they want to use part of the Rail Trail property, they might be able to get permission from the Bureau of Trails.

Alicia noted next steps:

- Peter will check with Chuck and Ray about a formal survey.
- If there is no survey, contact surveyors.
- Contact the Bureau of Trails about limitations and options.
- Wendy will send maps to Alicia.

This will be reviewed and revised at next month's meeting, and surveyors will be contacted, if necessary.

Camping on Town Properties: To be discussed at the April Meeting

Establish Buffers: To be discussed in September. Look into how to get set-backs through a zoning ordinance or do an updated wetlands study. Peter informed the group that a study was done in 2003, and he has binders of information. At the time landowners did not want to establish set-backs. Steven suggested getting a smaller committee together to research and discuss this and bring the information to the September meeting.

LUCT: WCC has received payment of \$25,000, which will go into the conservation fund.

Ballam Farm: Jackie did the easement monitoring last year. Christian Gowdy called Alicia to tell her he is applying for NRCS funding for invasive species control. It would mostly be mulching and seeding heavily to suppress the invasives for their organic gardening.

Other Business

Walpole Trails Subcommittee: Alicia asked if the maps are being printed. Steven said they will cost 64 cents/sheet (front and back). Six maps are ready to print; the seventh will be ready shortly. Steven asked how many they should have printed. John stated that they have waited a long time and should have 100 printed. Steven moved to approve up to \$500 for printing of the trail maps. The motion was seconded by France. All voted in favor via roll call.

John asked where these maps would be stored. Steven suggested Town Hall. Alicia asked Steven to email Sarah about putting these in the Conservation storage area. There was a discussion of what type of container could be used and where it should be located. Lew said these maps will be available online, as well. Steven offered to write an article about the maps for the Clarion, explaining where they can be found. Kara suggested putting some in the library.

Cheryl questioned how they would pay for the maps. She stated the Trail Expense money is \$750, and map and chart amount is \$300. Steven said they could pull some money from the Trail Expense. Cheryl said that is legitimate, and the group agreed.

Property Monitoring: Steven has created the trail monitoring sheet. He and Alicia explained what each of the columns means. He explained where the proper forms could be found online and has a GPS app that can be used. Alicia asked for an easement folder where she could drop all the forms. The Monadnock Conservancy Questionnaire also needs to be added to the list, as should the gateway. There is a large volunteer base willing to do this monitoring, if they can be trained.

Alicia thanked Steven for creating the spreadsheet. At the March meeting people can sign up to do the monitoring. Steven asked for suggestions for buttoning up the chart.

Reservoir Dam: Steve Dalessio is trying to set up a meeting with Fuss and O'Neill and Mark Houghton to discuss solution options.

John said the Infrastructure Bill includes \$800 billion for dam removal across the nation. Rutgers University is offering a 2-day online course on the dam removal and grant options. The course costs \$350 before March 3, \$395 after that date. Cheryl explained Training, Seminars, and Travel Funds are not sufficient to fund this; the money can come from Conservation money. This course can be paid for with the Training and Maintenance budgets as well. Alicia wants to attend. John moved to approve provide the money for Alicia to attend the Rutgers University course. Peter seconded the motion and all voted by roll call in favor. Motion passed.

Hooper Forest: Alex is doing a forestry plan but ran into an issue with mapping. He questioned whether the northern 12 acres are part of the Hooper Forest. Peter suggested doing a deed search since no one on the Commission could definitively answer the question.

WCC Website: France sent out information that should be included in the WCC website. Alicia asked that she send this information to Ryan. She said she could do a neater presentation and

send to him and ask him for feedback. Cheryl said he will be moving, so France needs to do this sooner than later.

Other: Kara shared a picture of trash located at Fanny Mason at the pull-off between guardrails. She reported it to Ben at the Recycling Center. She said it is too difficult to remove right now because of ice and snow. Lew offered to pick it up with a truck and trailer. Cheryl said if Ben cannot do it, he could get the Highway Department to help.

With no further business to discuss, Steven moved to adjourn the meeting; Lew seconded, and all voted in favor. Alicia adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

The next meeting will be Monday, March 7, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Kobeski, Recording Secretary

** These minutes are in draft form until approved at the March 7, 2022 meeting.