

**Minutes for the Regular Meeting of the
Walpole Conservation Commission
September 12, 2022**

Members Present: Alicia Flammia, John Peska, Peter Palmiotto, Lewis Shelley, Laura Hayes, Steven Dumont

Members Absent: France Menk

Alternates Present: Kara Dexter

Visitors Present: Cheryl Mayberry, Selectboard Liaison, Alex Barrett, Long View Forest Management, Jean Kobeski, Recording Secretary

Call to Order: Alicia called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. This meeting was recorded.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Peter made two amendments to the August minutes. On the first page, his last name should be spelled *Palmiotto*. He also asked to strike the last sentence on the first page under New Business, *She let it go*. With those amendments John made a motion to accept the August 1, 2022 minutes. Lew seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. Motion carried.

Public Business

Treasury: Conservation \$190,719.03
Forestry \$23,294.36
Walker Road \$2,144.98

Cheryl advised Alicia to contact Rich for totals until a new Treasurer is in place.

Correspondences

In February the Town gave permission for DES to take soil samples in the northern undeveloped area of Fanny Mason to determine PFAS concentrations occurring naturally, without release. The results showed below the extremely low level. John asked if any other area of the town was tested, and Alicia said no. Peter asked if the testing would be expanded. Alicia said, at this time, it will be limited to drinking water and background soils. Alicia passed around the report for the membership to read. After further discussion, Laura asked if this report is good news for the town. Alicia responded it is very good news.

The New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions and Cheshire County Conservation District are hosting the 6th Annual Conservation Commission Potluck on Wednesday, September 14, from 5:30 - 8:00 p.m. at Stonewall Farm. Alicia has tickets if anyone is interested in attending.

Old Business

Walpole Gateway Update: Alicia stated the parking area looks great. John and Lew staked out a 24' x 24' area. Lew recommends using ledgepack with an 8-10" minimum depth. The excavated material can be put further down the hill to the left to block people from going into the brook.

John stated he talked to Mark Houghton about what the commission plans to do and to get an estimate from him on the work. Lew said it is possible the fire department may want a larger

area for rescue vehicles. Alicia said she would like to talk about that further before they make final decisions. Peter said he would wait before ordering split rail fence.

Lew stated that, if a few trees were cut, the parking area could be seen from the kiosk.

Steven asked if the gate will be left open. Alicia said as soon as there is signage, Surepack, and a split rail fence, the gate will be opened.

Hooper Forest Update: Alex Barrett of Long View Forest reported that the invasives have been treated in the Hooper Forest. He then distributed copies of the Hooper Forest Timber Harvest Prospectus and a harvest map. First Alex discussed the map and where and how harvest would take place. He described the types of trees they found in the various areas. They buffered around the lean-to, and he said they would have to clean up the bike trails when finished. He asked to whom he should speak about the bike trails and was directed to Rob Westover. He then discussed more of the timber harvest plan as outlined in the prospectus.

The town has given the green light for single source procurement, so Alex contacted a local logger and showed him the scope of the work. He is waiting to hear whether or not this individual can take the job. If not, Alex will have a showing and put the work out to bid. John asked about the time frame. Alex said if this logger accepts the job, he could possibly do it in November - December. If Alex has to do a showing, it would most likely be next summer.

Wood pricing was discussed and Alex explained how payment is made. He estimates this timber harvest could bring in roughly \$20,000 - \$30,000, depending on the type and condition of the wood. Alex also explained how the wood is measured (in board feet).

Alex stated that he should be able to present pricing and a contract at the next WCC meeting.

Peter asked a question about a statement in the prospectus regarding stone put on Reservoir Road for access. Alex explained that loggers may want to have stone put down to accept the weight of the log trucks. The Commission will need to discuss whether they prefer to work out some type of payment plan with the town or have the cost of the stone automatically added to the cost of the job.

Peter also asked if the project should be discussed with the homeowner at the end of Reservoir Road. Alex said he has already spoken to that individual, who did have the request that the grassy area between the town road and class 6 be restored. Alex has reseeded that area in the plan.

Alex suggested having a walk-about to make the public aware of what is happening during the timber harvest. Alicia said the Hooper Institute Board should be involved, and it was also suggested to contact the bike riders who use those trails.

Alicia asked Alex about treatment of the invasives on the Gateway property. He said that should probably be done next week.

There was a brief discussion of what to do about the pile of old pine logs at the top of the hill. Ideas were presented. Lew reminded the group that these are on Rail Trail property. No decisions were made at this time.

Easement Monitoring: Alicia has drafted an email to send to the easement subcommittee about meeting in October. She said she attended a training given by the NHACC on how to use Gaia GPS. She stated the advantage to using it would be that boundary information from the town could be pulled up and records could be kept. With the pay-for version these reports could be printed out. At the first meeting of the subcommittee she wants to discuss what tools should be used so that, in the future, the group wouldn't need to start all over from scratch when doing the monitoring. Steven pointed out that this information is on Google Drive, but Alicia said that not everyone has access to those files. She feels it would be important to also have copies made to be put into the Commission files. Lew stated Gaia isn't expensive and it is upgraded frequently. All the trail information is on Gaia.

Commission Website: The group agreed that it looks very good, but there is concern about upkeep. Who will be responsible for providing current information? Steven asked if Kelli will train commissioners to upload information. Peter asked that Kelli attend a meeting to present the website. Alicia will invite her to next month's meeting.

Other Business

Walpole Trails Subcommittee: Steven reported that last month the Mill Pond Clean-up was completed.

Rail Trail Update: The trail has been brush hogged. Alicia received two invoices from Wendy. The first was for \$175 for the extra work done on the Gateway property, which will be paid from the Walker Road account. The second was \$400 from Mike Hubbard, to be paid from the Conservation Savings Account. Wendy requested a line item of \$1500 on the budget for annual Rail Trail maintenance.

Lew asked about money that was discussed at a previous meeting for a brush cutter. He stated that the steel brush cutter, face mask, and helmet would cost roughly \$650. John made a motion to approve up to \$650 for the purchase of the brush cutter and safety accessories. Laura seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Motion carried.

Reservoir Dam: John reported that DES was in town to look at the two well sites and Reservoir Dam area. There is nothing else to report at this time.

Other:

Walpole Veterinary Clinic Announcement: Beccah Kenyon from the Walpole Veterinary Hospital sent Alicia a notice about their October 29 farmers' market/open house. She said they would be using the field beside the hospital for a sheep herding demonstration. The Commission has no issue with the clinic using the field.

Laura announced the Cheshire County Conservation Commission District Annual Meeting on September 28 at the Keene Country Club. There will be a silent auction, food, and music. Tickets are \$35.

Laura also asked if a Conservation Commission email list serve could be created. Often members are left off of emails and trail subcommittee members are included in Commission-only emails. Cheryl said this could be done to share information but not for decision-making purposes. Decisions are restricted to meetings only.

John reported that he recently saw a landscape truck that does hydro seeding being filled at the Mill Pond. He asked if there are any regulations restricting such activity. Lew will contact a relative who is in the business for an answer to this question.

Cheryl announced the Hooper Fall Festival on September 24 from 11:00 - 3:00. There will be activities, bake sale and a raffle.

With no further business Peter motioned to adjourn; John seconded, and Alicia closed the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

The next meeting will be on Monday, October 3, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Kobeski, Recording Secretary

** These minutes are in draft form until approved at the October 3, 2022 meeting.