

**Minutes for the Regular Meeting of the  
Walpole Conservation Commission  
January 9, 2023**

**Members Present:** Alicia Flammia, John Peska, France Menk, Peter Palmiotto, Lew Shelley, Laura Hayes

**Members Absent:** Steven Dumont

**Alternates Present:** Kara Dexter, Wendy Grossman

**Visitors Present:** Cheryl Mayberry (Selectboard liaison), Steve Dalessio (Selectboard), Alex Barrett (Long River), Jean Kobeski (Recording Secretary)

**Call to Order:** Alicia called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. This meeting was recorded.

**Old Business**

**Hooper Forest with Alex Barrett:** Prior to the meeting Alex sent a contract to Commissioners for review. Alex reports that he did a walk-through with Chris Ricci and everything is marked. Chris had a buyer for the red pines (which are used for telephone poles), take a look and mark the trees to cut. Alex received some pricing from him over the weekend, and Alex said the figures look good.

Alex said he has drawn up the contract and Intent to Cut. He said the Selectboard voted to waive the timber yield tax. Once the contract is approved, Chris and his subcontractor will provide Certificates of Insurance and he said, weather permitting, he could begin next week.

Wendy asked who owns the Hooper Forest; Steve Dalessio explained the Town owns it in trust and the Selectboard members are the trustees. The contract, therefore, is with the Town.

Wendy pointed out that the contract explains how the buyer will pay Long View but not how Long View will pay the Town. John said in the past that information was spelled out at the end of a contract, allowing for variables that came up during the harvest. Peter suggested payment based on the progression of the work, but not weekly as Alex stated he could do. Monthly would be more manageable. Alex said he would add this to the contract.

John asked the acreage of the work. It would be roughly 46 acres. Alex then explained how he determined pricing.

Wendy asked about the previously discussed walk-about prior to the harvest. She stated now would be the time to do it, since work could potentially begin next week. The group discussed this and decided that the event, led by Alex, would take place on Sunday, January 15, at 2:00 p.m. Participants should meet at the end of Reservoir Road. Wendy volunteered to notify the public about the event.

Lew asked if there would be any chipping. Alex said there would be hardwood and bio mass chipping.

Laura pointed out that the map still states Walpole, VT.

To summarize, Alex stated he would correct the contract to clarify payment and timing thereof from Long View to the Town, change contact name from Alicia to the Selectboard members, and change VT to NH on the map. Steve told Alex if he got the contract to Sarah by Wednesday

morning, it would be signed by the Selectboard Wednesday evening. The Commissioners thanked Alex for his update.

Lew suggested taking photos and videos of the harvest for Facebook.

**Review and Approval of December Minutes:** France moved to accept December minutes as written. John seconded and all voted to approve.

### **Public Business**

**Report from the Chair:** Alicia stated that it is time to think about electing a new chair of the Conservation Commission. A discussion ensued, including the pros and cons of co-chairs or a vice chair. Steve Dalessio stated that terms generally expire at Town Meeting in March. New chairs are elected by the other boards at their first meeting after Town Meeting, with this being the first item on the agenda.

Alicia stated that a Town Report from the Commission is due before the March Town Meeting. She asked Kara to write the report; Kara agreed, with Alicia as proofreader.

<b>Treasury:</b>	Conservation Savings Account	\$190,264.70
	Forestry	\$23,606.95
	Gateway	\$1,996.92
	Mason Expendable	\$459,060.91
	Mason Non-Expendable.	\$19,426.03

**Correspondence:** The Commission received a bill from NHCC for the annual membership fee. John moved to approve \$250 for the membership fee; Lew seconded and all voted in favor.

The Commission received publications from the NH Charitable Foundation and Monadnock Conservancy.

**New Business:** Alicia suggested planning a Bio Blitz community science event with Michael Nerrie, the Hooper Institute, or Stephen LaMonde sometime in the spring, summer, or fall. No concrete plans were made at this meeting.

### **Old Business Continued...**

**Commission Website:** Commissioners acknowledged receipt of Kelli's email. Prior to the meeting, Steven sent an email stating Kelli should have everything she needs from the Trails Committee. Wendy suggested that, in the "Explore" section, properties like High Blue or the Rail Trail be included rather than just have town properties listed. France said she spoke to Kelli about this and suggested Kelli change the title from "Town Properties" to something like "Trails in Walpole" to include them all and designate ownership.

France stated photos of people, not just trails, should be included in the website.

Alicia asked Commissioners to send any other information they want to have included on the website to Kelli. She will invite Kelli to the February meeting, at which time they can decide when to go live.

Lew announced he is now steward of High Blue.

## Other Business

**Walpole Trails Subcommittee:** Wendy announced a number of future events planned by the subcommittee. These include an all-trail clean-up/maintenance day chaired by Wendy and Kara on April 29.

Lew said he has three sets of keys for the town garage, where Commission equipment is stored. He spoke to Mike Rau about distribution of the keys. One set will be given to the town office; one will stay with the Commission; and the third is to be shared. Lew needs to clarify with the Selectboard how those keys can be shared before they are used. He said the room in the garage will be cleaned; shelves will be built, and a sign-out sheet will be created.

There was a brief discussion about how to involve children in conservation efforts. Alicia suggested contacting Nick LaBail at the Walpole Middle School, who has contacted the Commission for projects for students, particularly at Mill pond (walking distance from the school).

France suggested having notices of the trail walks to be sure to include children.

John reminded the commissioners about the UNH 4-H Barry Conservation Camp, which offers scholarships to students. The program was suspended due to covid, but he said he would find out if it is once again open so that a local student might be given one of the scholarships.

**Reservoir Dam:** Steve Dalessio attended the meeting to address concerns and questions Commissioners had regarding the repair of Reservoir Dam. First, he distributed a letter from Fuss and O'Neill, which clarified statements and concerns expressed in the Reservoir Dam portion of the December 5, 2022, Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes.

Steve then stated that the dam had been misclassified for many years, and when it was most recently designated high hazard, everything changed. He said the DES will not approve anything but "flattening" the property because the slope of the dam is too deep. The dam needs to be extended out. A high recreational value is placed on the dam. Steve said that it is a watershed. If the dam were removed, the water needs to go somewhere and may overtop the roads, creating even more problems. He also said that they are not certain what is under the dam. There is about 18" of soil, under which there is something solid.

Steve said the Selectboard applied for grant money from the state and received \$740,000, which will cover 100% of the cost of repair. They are waiting for the Executive Council to approve the work; once that is done, it can begin on a "pay-as-you-go" basis. As work is completed, invoices will be submitted and paid.

Steve said other work needs to be done:

1. The culvert needs to be lined/repared
2. The spillway needs to be widened.
3. Vegetation needs to be removed/put back in.
4. Trap for some weeping that is occurring.

Alicia asked if the design for the repair is complete; Steve answered it is about 85% complete. Lew asked who is doing the design work; Steve answered Fuss and O'Neill is doing it. Concerns about pricing have been addressed by Steve and Mark Houghton. F & O handles all the grant writing, bidding, and permitting. John recommended using local contractors, when possible. Steve said that is what they are trying to do.

Steve said as soon as they get approval from the Executive Council, they can begin the bidding process.

Lew asked if changes to the dam will affect recreational use and aquatic life. Steve assured him that it would not, and they have considered aquatic life in their planning.

Peter asked if the flattening of the dam will affect abutters; Steve said it will not and he produced paperwork with measurements to address that concern.

Steve reviewed numerous other projects involving water that the Town is addressing.

Kara led the Commission in thanking Steve for his work on the dam project.

**Property Monitoring:** Alicia stated she completed Cranberry Meadow Nature Sanctuary. She updated the form on Google Docs. Wendy expressed interest in doing some monitoring. She will email Alicia for directions.

**Property Monitoring Intern Job Description:** Peter reported the job description went public. He hopes to get someone on board this spring. He said the responsibilities will include developing a monitoring program, updating information on easements (history and restrictions), and organizing files.

**Gateway:** John received a quote of \$995 for the Gateway parking lot, depending on the cost of materials in the spring. France moved to approve the \$995 for the Gateway parking lot; Lew seconded, and all voted in favor.

There was a brief discussion about disposing of the rotting timber at the Gateway. No decision was made, as Lew reminded the commissioners that it was probably on the Rail corridor.

**“Preserve Walpole”:** John announced the Planning Board’s meeting tomorrow night. He would like to have a consensus from the Commission supporting the “Preserving Walpole” effort. Alicia asked that commissioners who attend the meeting come back to the Commission’s February meeting to discuss this, and at that time, they can discuss an endorsement.

**Trees on the Common:** Peter questioned some information he read in the Selectboard minutes about planting trees on the common. He was concerned that Norway maples would be planted. Cheryl explained that the Selectboard is working with an arborist on a systematic approach to rehabbing the Common and assured him no Norway maples would be planted.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

**The next meeting will be Monday, February 6, 2023.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Kobeski, Recording Secretary

\*\* These minutes are in draft form until approved at the February 6, 2023 meeting.