

**Minutes for the Regular Meeting of the
Walpole Conservation Commission
January 8, 2024**

Members Present: Peter Palmiotto, France Menk, Lewis Shelley, Wendy Grossman

Members Absent: John Peska, Steven Dumont, Alicia Flammia

Seating of Alternates: Nicole Adams

Visitors Present: Peggy Pschirrer (Selectboard Liaison), Jean Kobeski (Recording Secretary)

Call to Order: Peter called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Wendy recommended the following corrections/clarifications be made to the December 4, 2023 minutes:

1. Ryan Owens stated that the Monadnock Conservancy would automatically send its monitoring reports to the Town rather than the Town needing to ask for them, as stated in the minutes.
2. On page 3 under Cranberry Meadow, it should be noted that no one from the Knapp family had claimed the land for 60 years; therefore the Town does own the land by adverse possession.
3. On page 4 under Rail Trail, the statement about the bond money being returned to Lew would best be placed at the end of the Rail Trail section of the minutes.
4. Phil Warren was planning to monitor Nelson Town Forest at 9:00 a.m. rather than 4 p.m. as written.

Peter noted that on p. 3 under Fanny Mason Clean-up, the steps on the east side are wooden, not stone, as written. Wendy moved to accept the minutes as amended. Nicole seconded and all voted in favor. Motion carried.

Public Business: There are no correspondences or financial report this month.

Peggy announced that on Thursday, February 8, at 5:30 p.m. in Town Hall there will be a public discussion of the town budget. Among topics to be discussed is the warrant article for solar panels at the recycling center. She encouraged everyone to attend.

Old Business: Peter announced that Aiden Sweeney, an eight grader at Walpole Middle School, will receive the Barry Conservation Camp Scholarship.

Dam Update: John reported to Peter that the state is reviewing the Fuss and O'Neill plans for Reservoir Dam. John spoke to Mark Houghton about the Cranberry Meadow clean-up. Mark said equipment will definitely be needed for the job; therefore a DES permit will be needed. Wendy asked if there is money in the budget for permitting and work, and Peter answered money is available.

Fanny Mason Rest Area: Lew stated that major roof repair is needed. He said the roofs are cedar shingles. He measured the roofs and will get an estimate for materials. Peter asked if cedar is needed and a discussion of possible alternatives ensued. Peggy asked if the work would be sent out for bids and was told it would.

Lew called the state about clearing brush and trees but received no response. He said he would personally visit the offices to discuss this. He made other suggestions to improve the area:

1. Remove the wooden steps.
2. Remove some trees for greater visibility.
3. Create signage to designate the trail.

Peter led a brief discussion about mowing the area. It was concluded that ownership of the property needs to be established first.

New Business: There is no new business at this time.

Other Business

Walpole Trails Subcommittee: There was no meeting in December.

Rail Trail: Wendy reported that they have received the \$20,000 RTP grant money and a positive report on the Rail Trail work from a visiting team.

The Town also received a refund of the \$1,000 bond that had been provided to the State for the brush hogging Special Use Permit.

Wendy proposed that she and Will make a presentation at the March Commission meeting about the Rail Trail and discuss moving forward. It was agreed that this would be a good idea.

France reported that a friend of hers saw someone driving a truck on the Rail Trail. Lew asked that she find out precisely where it was so that they can begin to address the issue.

Lew asked Wendy if she had any information on the progress of the Keene RTP Grant work. Wendy said she and Will visited that area. Trees had been cut down and ruts smoothed out.

Monadnock Conservancy Monitoring: Wendy accompanied the Conservancy as they monitored the Nelson and March Town Forests. She went with Phil Warren, who does not actually work for the Conservancy, but does monitoring for them.

Ramsay Hill and Reservoir Roads: Wendy reported that loggers have created large ruts and have dumped trees and brush in the Watershed Town Forest. She checked with Alex at the Monadnock Conservancy on the easement. He came and walked it with her and said this was in violation of the easement and recommended that it be discussed with the landowner and logger. This was done, and the logger should be clearing the debris this week. Peggy said there was never any intent to damage property and the landowner has been very cooperative throughout the process.

Property Monitoring: Wendy completed monitoring Ballam Farm with Chris Gowdy and the Graves Easement and submitted the easement reports. She said the Forest Society needs someone to do the Aldrich easement.

Pamphlet Distribution: Peggy said she distributed pamphlets in December explaining how conservation commissions can approach the state about creating a bottle bill. Peter will check with John to see if he has the pamphlets.

With no further business to discuss, Lew moved to adjourn the meeting. France seconded, and all voted in favor. Peter adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

The next meeting will be on Monday, February 5, 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Kobeski, Recording Secretary

** These minutes are in draft form until approved at the February 5, 2024 meeting.