

TOWN OF WALPOLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
JUNE 3, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Alicia Flammia, Wendy Grossman, France Menk, Peter Palmiotto (presiding), John Peska, Lewis Shelley

SELECTBOARD REPRESENTATIVE: Steve Dalessio

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Nicole Adams

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tom Beaudry (Alternate)

CALL TO ORDER: Peter Palmiotto, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall. This meeting was audio recorded for the purpose of accurate minutes.

INTRODUCTIONS: Everyone introduced themselves for the benefit of the new Recording Secretary.

MEETING AGREEMENTS: Peter reviewed the Meeting Agreements which the Commission developed last October.

SEATING OF ALTERNATES: Six members were present, so there was no need to seat Alternates.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Sue noticed that the date in the footer should be May 6th, not the 5th. The property monitoring walks will be June 6th. Wendy clarified the next to last sentence under Rail Trails – there will be an opportunity in the fall to consider applying for grants. John moved to accept the May 6, 2024 minutes as amended. Alicia seconded and all voted in favor. The motion carried.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Report from co-Chair: no report

Financial Report:	Conservation	\$ 225,407.75
	Forestry	\$25,401.33

Correspondence: *The Purpose* magazine was received from NH Charitable Foundation. The US Department of Interior sent a thick document regarding relicensing that was received by the Selectboard. There were also three declarations, and they were sent at the end of the comment period. Notification was received from DES – see Harvesting Concerns under New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

Harvesting Concerns – DES Notification: The notification from the Department of Environmental Services concerns a logging project on a property located on Merriam Rd. that was connected to another property on County Rd. There are possible violations related to wetlands, stream crossings that resulted in erosion and sedimentation. Lew lived on the property in question

and was a caretaker there for 23 years before moving to an adjacent property to the one being investigated. He did not file the complaint or know who did and feels this is best left to DES to finish their investigation. There is nothing else for the Conservation Commission to do at this time. If an official statement is requested, the Town Forester will be asked to provide his professional opinion of the condition of the property. This is similar to a complaint last year at the end of Reservoir Road, so the public seems more willing to file complaints.

These types of problems can occur if landowners do not hire a professional forester to supervise logging projects using best management practices. A discussion followed about how the Town might help landowners avoid such issues and complaints, which can be expensive. It was pointed out that if the land is in current use and the owner hires a forester to write a management plan there is a tax break. The Commission decided to ask Sarah Downing to attend a meeting to discuss current use.

Rest Area Cleanup and Shelter Update: Lew rewrote the RFQ for shelter roof repairs which is ready and will go out to three vendors on Thursday. The goal is to respond to the vendors by July 3rd (the Commission meets July 1st).

John said we need to find someone to clean the rest areas since the prior employee has stepped away from doing it. For now, Kara Dexter is volunteering to stop to pick up on the way to work and on the way home. Kara can be hired as an individual contractor, and she has the appropriate insurance. John will work with Kara to understand the amount of time required, define the scope of work, and recommend a reasonable pay rate.

Endorsing Commission Member Renewal: John Peska's term has ended, and he would like to continue for another three-year term. Peter moved the Commission endorse John for another term. France seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Town Lands – Forest Management: Fanny Mason timber harvest has been marked. Peter will follow up with Alex Barrett for an update as Alex did not make the meeting.

Master Plan – Conservation Lands Map/Table: Map continues to be updated.

Property Monitoring: Wendy will go with Monadnock Conservancy to monitor three properties Thursday morning at 8:00. Wendy requested a Property Monitoring Committee meeting to develop guidelines and feedback. Wendy will get the Gateway into the database as soon as possible. Peter offered maps as needed. Alicia suggested a discussion of property at the August meeting for fall monitoring.

The Tree Committee: The committee was formed about a year ago. Now it is time to identify the species to be planted on the Common so we can plant three this fall. Peter, as liaison, will reach out to contact.

OTHER BUSINESS

Reservoir Dam: Steve reported the project is moving forward. They are working on the borings. Houghton Brook bridge is stalled because of price. School Street will be the next big project – working on the brook and all new drainage, but there is no funding available now. Mill Pond has been

identified as a high hazard, which means the dam needs to be raised, and therefore, also the road. The concern is that if the dam lets go the water could damage Route 12.

Hooper Institute Board Update: Nicole reported that the Board will meet Wednesday. They are focusing on facility repairs. There hasn't been an update on the trails.

Walpole Gateway: The Gateway has been hayed.

Trail Committee: Wendy reported the Trail Committee had its first meeting with her as Chair on May 8th. The Trail Committee members brainstormed ideas for activities, both maintenance and other events. She is also still working on the special use permit language to brush hog the Rail Trail.

Website: France suggested two changes to the website:

1. Change the heading "Trail News" to "News" so more information can be included – this was acceptable to the members.
2. Add a Farming section to the website. Members discussed the idea as farming is integral to the conservation of the character of the town. It was suggested that Tom Beaudry, as a fellow farmer, be asked to assist to ensure the project is a collaborative and inclusive effort with the farmers in Town before any additions to the web page are done.

France is also putting some news on the front page and adding places for people to comment. She gets the comments.

Hooper Map: Lew found a new, and better, map of Hooper that may shed light on the Cranberry Meadow exchange with Walpole. The map helps, but the deed was not recorded with the County, so the mystery is on-going.

ADJOURNMENT: John moved the meeting adjourn. Seconded by France. Peter declared the meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Bauer, Recording Secretary

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the July 1, 2024 Conservation Commission meeting.)