

TOWN OF WALPOLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
JULY 1, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Alicia Flammia, Wendy Grossman, France Menk, John Peska, Cochair, Lewis Shelley

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Nicole Adams, Tom Beaudry

SELECTBOARD REPRESENTATIVE: Steve Dalessio

MEMBERS ABSENT: Peter Palmiotto, Cochair

GUESTS PRESENT: Alex Barrett with Long View Forest in Saxons River, VT, and Paul Happ

CALL TO ORDER: John Peska, the presiding Cochair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall.

SEATING OF ALTERNATES: No alternates were needed because five members were present.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Alicia moved to accept the June 3, 2024 minutes as previously amended. Wendy seconded and all voted in favor. The motion carried.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Report from co-Chair: John (continuing) and Tom (returning to the Commission) have been sworn in.

Financial Report:	Conservation	\$226,393.73
	Forestry	\$25,512.44

The Antioch bill for help with the mapping has been paid.

Correspondence: The Town received notification that the DES complaint has been resolved regarding logging off County Road. The project off March Hill Road near Distant Hills has received approval to continue. Monadnock Conservancy magazine arrived.

The following topics are moved to the top of the agenda because Alex was waiting to speak to them:

Fanny Mason Harvesting Visit: Alex distributed a map showing the Fanny Mason harvest area, the area of large pines that will not ever be harvested, and the wet hemlock area that will not be harvested. The harvest area will be near the trail, but the logging road will only cross the trail once – it is necessary to cross the trail somewhere. The landing will be north of the harvest area and is the same one used twelve years ago because it has road access. The rest areas on Route 12 are south of the harvest area. Alex will have an estimate for the September meeting. The Commission needs to determine whether they want to put out bids or go directly to a known reputable logger. The plan is to go over some of the worst ruts from the last harvest, which was during terribly wet weather, to help smooth the area. This harvest will remove some of the old trees left last time for seed sources and get more light for the new growth. This harvest will leave a buffer between the harvest area and

Route 12, but it is all hemlocks. A new buffer area next to the hemlocks will be built from young trees. After the harvest the trail could be extended with the logging road to make a loop. Most of the new growth from the last harvest is black birch, but there are some buckthorns, which need to be cut out now.

Alex will update the previous chart, which is saved on Google drive, showing status and plans for Town forests.

Red Pine Harvest near Rest Areas: The red pines on the west side of Route 12 need to be harvested before they are infected. Alex will combine the red pine with the harvest plan for the east side of Route 12. Alex will contact the State regarding a landing on the west side of Route 12. Note: the fence on the west side of Route 12 can be cut for access to the red pine, but it needs to be put back in place after the harvest.

Invasives Plan: One treatment was done at Hooper. Need follow-up treatment now. A little was done at the Gateway, and that should be repeated to maintain the open property. Across from Hooper should be treated for invasives now so that in 2-3 years some patch cuts could be made where the pines are not growing.

NRCS has funding available to non-profits, but not for governments, so the Friends of Hooper should apply for funding for the work on Hooper property. Alex recommended starting a Friends of Walpole Conservation to obtain funding.

Alex Barrett left the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Rest Area Cleanup and Shelter Update: John reported Kara is now spending 1 – 1.25 hours per week cleaning the rest areas. He recommends paying \$18 an hour for a maximum of two hours per week to be billed quarterly. This would be a maximum of \$1870 per year, but the rest areas are not plowed in the winter. France moved approval for hiring Kara Dexter to clean the Fanny Mason rest areas for \$18/hour, a maximum of two hours per week. Wendy seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. The rest areas are not mowed but should be to make it look nicer and to make it easier to keep clean. Steve suggested calling the Walpole Highway Department (Mike Symonds) about mowing – John will call tomorrow.

Shelter updates: Lew reported that he sent the shelter RFQ's to three companies. One is not interested, one is too busy, and Tim Smith of Longs Roofing could do it in winter (that's when he does all his metal roofs). Lew will put the RFQ's back out. The red pine harvest will get rid of the brush in the south-bound rest area. The north-bound rest area also needs work but it will have to wait until late summer or fall. Lew will check the picnic tables and determine what they need.

OLD BUSINESS

Harvesting Concerns – DES Notification Resolved: *The Town was notified the complaint regarding logging off County Road has been resolved.*

Property Monitoring: On June 6th Wendy walked three areas with the Monadnock Conservancy. In Great Brook Town Forest there is a major washout of a snowmobile trail which has slumped into the

brook in a very wet area. There are lots of tires in some spots, which is a recurring issue. In Bertin Town Forest a piece of a snowmobile bridge washed down the stream, so the bridge needs to be repaired, but they also need to remove the broken pieces from the stream. There is also an unsightly old farm dump, but no action will be taken now. In Watershed Town Forest there are five new breaks in the stone wall on Reservoir Road to let the road drain. Two dumping locations were found along Reservoir Road, a small new one and a large pre-existing one. New material had recently been added to the pre-existing dump pile, which is near the end of the Town-maintained portion of Reservoir Road. There are also serious ruts by the snowmobile trail bridge near Reservoir Road.

John will call Dan Reed who managed the harvest off Reservoir Road. Last time they spoke, the plan was to have everything back to the original condition in June. John also agreed to address the large dumping pile on Reservoir Road. Wendy will contact the Hooper Hoppers about the trail damage she has found.

OTHER BUSINESS

Reservoir Dam: The borings are complete and we are waiting for testing. Work is progressing.

Hooper Institute Board Update: Nicole reported that at the last meeting they did not have a quorum so the meeting was short. There was an update on the energy audit and they are working with an architect. A letter was sent to Rob Westover stating there will be no new bike trails in the Hooper Forest and requesting that mountain bikers stop using existing trails.

Trail Committee: The Rail Trail was brush hogged June 19th and 20th. The invoice has not yet been received. Wendy made a motion to spend \$450 on the June brush hogging which was previously approved, plus \$450 to brush hog again in August. Alicia seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. June 17th was a workday for Mill Pond. There will be a Fanny Mason trail workday in July. Lew found there are two trees down on the Rail Trail since brush hogging. The large oak off Black Jack Crossing near Houghton's drive is dangerous and will need to be removed with equipment because it rolls. A Rail Trail sign near Homestead is falling down and needs to be pounded in.

Trees for the Common: Peter is working with Lewis LaClair regarding his offer to use some of the sugar maples he planted on the Common.

Current Use: Sarah Downing will attend the next meeting to discuss current use. Tom mentioned that there is an effort at the State level to update the current use laws to make it more effective.

Planning Board: The Planning Board will present the new master plan at a hearing on July 9th at 7:00pm. This a public hearing.

ADJOURNMENT: Lew moved the meeting adjourn. Alicia seconded. All were in favor. John declared the meeting adjourned at 8:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Bauer, Recording Secretary

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the August 5, 2024 Conservation Commission meeting.)