

THE HOOPER INSTITUTE  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
July 9, 2024

Sue Nadeau called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm, July 9, 2024, in the Hooper Institute Building. Present were board members Will Grossman, Annette Beers, Nicole Adams, Amy Owens, Seth Andrews; Executive Director Helen Dalbeck, Selectboard members Steve Dalessio and Carolyn Vose and Peggy Pschirrer, Hooper Project Director.

Ms. Nadeau asked for a volunteer to be the chair the Institute's September board meeting. Annette Beers agreed to lead the September meeting.

Helen Dalbeck gave a review of the Institute's June meeting which did not have a quorum. She reviewed the letter she had written to Rob Westover regarding the request for mountain bike trails in the Hooper Forest. The Request was denied so the forest could recover from its recent harvest. Andrew Dey and Peggy Pschirrer discussed plans for renovating the Hooper Institute as well as their employment of Christopher Adams as the architect for the project.

Ms. Nadeau reviewed the minutes of the May board meeting. Emma Kobeski resigned as secretary for the Hooper Board, effective immediately so the Board now needs to find a new secretary. The question was raised as to whether the Institute Board should hire a secretary. The Selectboard, the Zoning Board and the Planning Board, all elected boards, have a paid secretary. The Conservation Committee, all appointed members, also has a paid secretary.

Discussion then followed on procedure for minutes of Town of Walpole committees: Minutes should be produced within five days, marked as unapproved and send to Sarah Downing in Town Hall. The minutes will then be posted for the public. Minutes may be amended and approved at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Ms. Nadeau read the section if the May minutes which discussed the request for bike trails in the Hooper Forest. The Board requested Helen write to Rob Westover with the Board's decision to allow the Hooper Forest to recover from its recent logging operation. The letter was sent before the June meeting. Mr. Grossman indicated he was in the minority because he would not have prohibited all biking from the Hooper Forest.

Mr. Dalessio reported that local bikers had come to him and to Carolyn Vose to voice their concerns about the Hooper Board's decision. Mr. Dalessio told the bikers they had the right to come before the Hooper board to discuss their request and ask for reconsideration of the Board's decision. Mr. Grossman pointed out that Mr. Westover has never come to any meeting to discuss his proposal for bike trails in the Hooper Forest.

Mr. Grossman moved to amend the May minutes by striking the sentence which read the Monadnock Conservancy does not allow bike trials on their easements. The motion was seconded Ms. Beers.

The amendment was unanimously approved.

Ms. Beers, Treasurer, gave a detailed Treasurer's report which was unanimously approved by a motion to accept by Ms. Owens and seconded by Ms. Adams. The Hooper Maintenance Fund at the end of May had an interest balance of \$189, 589.71. The Hooper Education/Scholarship Fund at the end of May had an income balance of \$84,949.22. The Savings Bank of Walpole account had a balance of \$22,140.32. The Treasurer also announced that the Institute had borrowed \$54,000. From the Town of Walpole which needs to be repaid.

Ms. Dalbeck reviewed her Director's Report which she had circulated by email. She is particularly pleased that she has had adult volunteers, Sue Nadeau and Judy Epstein, assist in Adventure Week. There are 54 participants in summer camp and fourteen registered for Wood working Week. The new garage door will be installed next week. Interns and scholarship recipients will be recognized July 24 at Town Hall. A Fall Festival of Flowers will be held September 21,2024.

The position for a second teacher has not been filled. Ms. Dalbeck is still searching. She expressed concern that teaching in the fifth grade may be a problem in the 2024-25 school year. She will meet with the Principal Justin Casserino to clarify Hooper Institute's position in the Walpole Schools. It is our mission to teach in the Walpole Schools. How much does the new Superintendent of Schools know about Hooper and its mission to teach in the elementary schools?

Ms. Adams asked what our long-term plans are for the Hooper Forest? Can we coordinate our plans with the Conservation Committee?

There was no report from the Friends of Hooper except they have a savings account of \$47,183.83 and a checking account of \$10,167.00.

Mr. Grossman who represents the Hooper Institute on the Scholarship Committee reported there were two applicants for scholarships this year. The Committee decided one applicant was not eligible but awarded Isabella Smith 8,000 for the 2024-25 school year.

Ms. Pschirrer reported that Christopher Adams has been hired as the architect for the Hooper Renovation. She expects to meet with him and Andrew Dey toward the end of July. In the meantime she has met with Andrew Dey who has developed a preliminary budget and with Mark Houghton to discuss the order of the renovation. The work will begin on the lowest level and start with the recommendations of the Energy Audit for insulation, window treatment, a new door and removal of the old shop equipment. Plans will include a lift and all necessary ADA requirements. A kitchen will be installed in one corner of the room.

Fixtures will include new tables and counters. The old Furnace will probably remain through the winter before it is removed, and new mini splits installed.

The Board discussion shifted to the Board recruitment and the potential for Guest Presenters at the board. The Board generally agreed that time limits for outside speakers had to be established so the board could also conduct regular business.

Ms. Vose asked if there was a management plan for the Hooper Forest? What is its purpose. It is important to get information from our forester. Mr. Westover had a proposal which stated the bikers' intentions for management of the bike trails.

Mr. Grossman asked about the trail which goes past the gardens. It appears to have been cleaned up. That trail leads to land own by Mr. Burns.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.