

HOOKSETT CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Monday, January 10, 2022

Hooksett Municipal Building

35 Main Street

Town Council Chambers

I. Open Meeting 4:30 pm

- I. **Attendance/Introductions** Cindy Robertson-Chair, JoCarol Woodburn-Member, David Ross-Vice Chair, Phil Fitanides-Member, Deborah Miville-Member, Alex Walczyk – Town Council Rep, John Peroni – Alternate Member. Bob Betters-Alternate Members, Sheena Gilbert – Planning Board Rep

II. Pledge of Allegiance 4:30

III. Public Input

IV. Consent Agenda

- i. 12/23/21 Transfer Finance Memorandum
- ii. 12/20/21 DES Wetland and Non-site-specific permit 2021-02999

Motion to approve Consent Agenda made by Alex Walczyk 2nd by, Deb Miville all in favor

V. Meeting Minutes Approvals

- i. 11/23/2021 Site Walk

Motion to approve made by Alex Walczyk 2nd by JoCarol Woodburn all in favor Deb Miville and David Ross abstained

- ii. 11/08/21 Minutes Revision Approval

Motion to approve made by Alex Walczyk 2nd by, Deb Miville All in Favor JoCarol Woodburn Abstained

- iii. 12/13/2021 – Minutes

Motion to approve made by Alex Walczyk 2nd by, JoCarol Woodburn*Correct Alex Walczyk misspelled last name. All in favor

VI. Invoices None

VII. Appointments

- i. Steve Couture & Katrina Amaral, Bear-Paw Stewardship Contract

Steve Couture & Katrina Amaral We wanted to discuss the status of the contract and how the Conservation board feels about the work being done. We are not hitting the cap on the funds

we have available it is not that we are not happy not to exceed \$19,000 but we will have to cut back some and we are still happy to continue with our Stewardship.

Cindy R I can't speak for everyone, but I am thrilled with the work. Rue and our partnership have been great, and I would like it to continue

David It is great to have this Stewardship program and you are a buffer for us. What are you thinking about cutting back on?

Katrina the monitoring will need to be cut back, maybe it can be completed by town volunteers and we would be happy to oversee that but not the development of the volunteering program or the monitoring

Cindy well it is good timing because we are developing Friends of the Trails volunteer group and already have people signed up. Our game plan is to have something once or twice a year to help clean up the trails. We are working with Kiwanis and On April 23rd as part of the Town's Bicentennial Celebration we are going to go out and do some trail maintenance, clean up garbage and pull Bittersweet. If we could get people that are interested in monitoring, you teach monitoring, correct?

Katrina yes, and we already do that for our easement monitors. We are good at the oversight side of things, and we could help with that.

Cindy so if we have some volunteers that are serious about this, and we could get them to the monitor training and then somebody overseeing them as they are out there. That is a good start.

Steve Maybe to build off that, because you will start your event on the 23rd in the spring maybe a specific workshop at the library an event where you are trying to recruit people for the stewardship for the properties and Bear Paw could help with maybe a speaker to talk about ways they can help the Conservation Commission with their properties weather it is monitoring talking about the easements of the trail. It could be an event to help build your volunteer program even more and it could be an outside held event.

Katrina Rue has a good woods navigation orienteering training that she does.

Cindy that is a great idea and we can coordinate that with you?

Katrina absolutely, we are trying to do one for our own monitoring and we could consider hosting somewhere accessible to Hooksett

Alex what exactly is the monitoring detail?

Katrina the town holds easements on properties, and this helps to make sure that there are no easement violations. Generally walking the boundaries. It explains what people need to look for in relation to easement violations and how to read a survey

Cindy they have monitoring forms to fill out so they know what to look for when they are out there.

David I like the idea for training and good to have a buffer with independent eyes to know what to look for. The training is great so they know what to look for and part of that should be some kind of certification. Something that says they are qualified. It involves that we have done our due diligence that we have trained, and they are qualified. I think that will give legitimacy if we get a complaint. We have a layer that Bear Paw provided training

Cindy I'll leave that up to Bear Paw, but these are volunteers that are committed to conservation. They want to do it and they have forms that are specific to what they are looking for. If they take a class and they learn and the first time they go out they are with people that

know what they are doing. It is very informal, but it is great that they are keeping an eye on things.

Deb any volunteer that wants to do something in for volunteering in Hooksett already has to fill out a form of what they want to do and why they want to do it and they have to provide information.

David I think just a recognition that they are somehow qualified and that we have done our due diligence before sending people in to these properties representing us in that capacity as far as monitoring

Steve as the Conservation Commission you are delegating and paying for the services the of Bear Paw to train these volunteers but ultimately you are responsible. So you would want to have a representative attend the training and by attending you would see what they are being trained on and you would have a comfort level. Also, the representative would talk about how, if you came across something out in the field how that information would get back to the Conservation Commission. So ultimately it is the Conservation Commission that resolves any issues, not the volunteer. So those little nuances would be part of the training and the communication and the workshop to avoid a lot of things. It would not be a formal certification because we are not asking for that much investment in time. So yes, it is informal but at the same time a comfort level for you and the volunteer and this information that ultimately is valuable for the town.

David I see and I agree but at the same time I think we need to have our due diligence proven.

Katrina we do this for 80 properties every year and Rue is handling 40 some independent units in the field We don't assign people to properties unless we get a good sense they can handle themselves well. I can understand your concerns because we have some of the same concerns. David the property owner could see someone doing something on their property and they can get confrontational, and we would hear about this. Maybe the con comm con come up with something on their own. I don't want to put ourselves in a compromising situation.

Alex how long is the training?

Katrina about an hour but everyone comes with their own skill levels when it comes to working in the wood and navigating. The one Rue was setting up last year was navigating with a compass to points and surveying a property some people after 15 mins are good to go and others take longer

David most would already have these skills

Katrina we match people with her skill levels some end up with easy properties and other the more complicated.

Alex so with the monitoring class, when someone is done, they have the knowledge to go through and complete the check list. Observe, Identify and Report

Katrina the town has a verity of parcels for the variety of comfort levels

Cindy in the past we have a list of priorities do you have that this year?

Katrina I think the town needs to generate. We have enough going on so I hope the town can provide that. I think Steve has a few things though.

JoCarol we have talked about getting the maps done for some of the conservation areas and Rue is working on the Pinnacle Park map and a larger map for the kiosks and a map for the Riverwalk trail. Update the brick kiln Loop too now that is completed

Cindy blazing at the Pinnacle to match the map and John was willing to help with that. We are moving forward with the Stewardship plan for University Heights boundaries and talking about if we can afford and go forward with what Dan Tatum proposed this year for boundaries

Steve with the plan itself the boundary survey is one component, and you have the option to do or not do but there will be other items to act on. It seems Pinnacle is in good shape and the Merrimack River Trail is good shape. So University Heights/Head Pond has a stewardship Plan to work on and activities we will pick out of that

Cindy more people have been asking about the Quimby Mt Trail. We beat back some of the invasives and we got a request from Keep It Native and asking for more time and money to dig deeper into the invasive plants there. If we do the April 23rd, I don't know if everyone knows what bittersweet looks like so can we have someone show them that, and help to identify the burning bushes

Katrina Paul Eaton may be the best point of contact for that and may be willing to do it.

Steve Naomi may have help with that too.

Katrina Nature Groupie and the Cooperative Extension may have videos

Steve one other thought for this upcoming year, if you would be interested another trail group and pulling together the application for that. Maybe look for coordination for them at Quimby to do some work on and Merrimack River Front Trail, that would finish off that property

Katrina and we enjoy overseeing those projects

Cindy I know the Riverwalk trail would not keep them busy for 10 days but maybe then they could move over to Quimby

Bob talking about University Heights is that the trail behind the Library. I was recently out there and there is a lot of trash beer cans and paper. Human trash.

Cindy that is part of the Heads Pond trail and our volunteers may be able to go there at our clean up because that is connected to Heads Pond.

David now the training that we talked about, will someone try to schedule?

Katrina That is everything Rue and I have talked about getting completed. One thing, I don't have our training schedule and Rue has already scheduled training and I know April is booked for us.

Cindy did Rue have the monitoring scheduled once a year and always at the same time, say the fall or spring?

Katrina it is usually in the spring, but our monitors may go once or twice.

David If you have training already scheduled could we attend one that is scheduled close by possibly

Katrina I think it is good to do it where they comfortable with the properties for Hooksett

Cindy asked Kathy to reach out to the list of volunteers for the April 23rd and as we get information for a possible training get that information out to them as well.

Deb I was speaking to someone from the list, and they were hoping for a letter with information about the projects

VIII. Other Business

- i. "Friends of the Trails" Program Discussion

Cindy April 23rd will be our Earth Day event and we need to draft a letter to talk about the April 23rd event. We need to reach out to DPW and ask about how much bittersweet they can accept and if they have bags. If not, maybe they can pick them up? Can we get tools and other supplies? I guess best to check with Parks and Recreation

JoCarol I don't think they throw the bittersweet in regular trash

Cindy would they come and pick it up? We need to know

David I think the volunteers should be bring their own tools and then if something were to happen we are not held liable

Sheena the Boy Scouts collected Christmas trees and worked with a farm or organization that had goats to eat it. Sheena will reach out and check if the goat farm would take our clippings

Cindy maybe the farm will collect the scraps.

Sheena maybe the Boy Scouts will want to help with the trail work too

David maybe some of them will want to attend the monitoring trainings for a badge.

JoCarol and Sheena discussed the letter/flyer for Friends of Hooksett Trail Sheena will post on the Facebook page

The next steps:

Cindy I asked Kiwanis to join us do we create a separate group or combine our groups

David I would check with them because they are in charge of the Heads Pond Trail

Cindy when I create the letter there are 2 events and I will make sure to cc Al Stein if they want to sign up and for which one.

John maybe state in conjunction with.

Cindy Al said they would love to join us. I will email him and ask him about the letter. Let's more information out on social media too.

JoCarol when we are recruiting people who is the contact person.

Kathy will be the email contact and post informational flyer on web site

David will talk with Earl and Phil at DPW about supplies.

Sheena will reach out to the Boy Scouts.

Cindy and Sheena Organizer on the Event Day

Continue the discussion on agenda in February

John I don't think involving the schools is a good idea right now and having young children take part may not be best.

Sheena I think we were looking at older high school students not younger kids.

Phil there is another place in Hooksett by Huttig that may take the clippings. They take anything from Hooksett residents for clippings

- ii. Follow-up for additional \$500.00 to produce 1 document for reporting
Cindy R provided the email to Phil as to what the \$500.00 entailed as he had requested
- iii. Amend License Agreement to Mow
DPW will talk over the mowing
- iv. Heads Pond Conservation Area Documentation continued discussion

Cindy R After our discussion last month, is this something we want to do now? Do we want to spend the money to have it all the boundaries done at once? John had made the comment that we have spent the money for the stewardship programs so we can use these properties, and this is information we need to do that

Sheena I did reach out to Nicholas and he was going to reach out to the owners, Green View Management, if they would do theirs this spring. I have a contact at the school board, they have no immediate plans, so they will not help with identifying the boundaries.

Cindy if we are going to have Dan do it then we need a time frame. I could email Dan Tatum and what the cost would be if University Heights did theirs. That could save some money

David I thought he was going break it up in 2 parts

David if Manchester Sand & Gravel owned and gave it to the Town, there must have had a survey (the school property) it was very precise. There are already markings, I'm sure.

Discussion back on for February Agenda

Sheena will get back with Nicholas about Greenview Management about the markings.

v. Beaver Removal on Riverwalk Trail

Cindy R Dan doesn't have his insurance yet, so he has not done anything. I would like to know if DPW has removed the pipe

vi. Quimby Mountain – Conservation Easement Monitoring Report close the

David the stone wall has been breached again and we need to close the breach again. I think we need to drop a big bolder. We should ask DPW if they can get something out there to do that. this is conservation land and no one is supposed to take a stone wall apart and we need to move forward to repair the breach. No motorized vehicles are allowed I believe I am correct on that.

Deb I thought we put signs up that no motorized vehicles use is allowed, did they get put up? So what if we fix it and someone does it again. I think we should make sure the signs are there.

Cindy if you talk with Bob ask him if they have pictures? I agree it should be closed back up.

David Ross made a motion to approached DPW to close the beach in the stone wall at Quimby Mountain. Deb Miville 2nd. All in Favor

JoCarol Do we have any medallions left. We had some **Kathy will check at the town office**

The board reviewed the Monitoring reports provided

vii. Conservation Commission Blog Report

JoCarol just letting you see the end of the year analysis and how much the blog is being viewed. There has been quite a bit of interest. It is getting more use every year

viii. Riverwalk Trail Donation

Cindy R a gentlemen reached out to us because he thinks there should be more bushes and trees at the beginning of the trail. He reached out to Naomi and offered to donate \$500. It sounds to me like he would like it more like a park and having trees and planting along the trail. We had a request for a bench there that we did not allow it be put there. And there is a bench along the trail that someone did without asking. Now they want to put a tree there too I don't think we should open these flood gates. It is not a park it is a trail and we don't have any maintenance for trees and planting.

JoCarol the Idea for conservation land and trails is to be no maintenance

John we have an issue there with the boundary. Could this be utilized to keep people on the trail and not wonder on to private property

Cindy I don't want anything to block the abutters view.

John the view is a good point.

Deb it is my understanding that you are not allowed to do anything on conservation land. If a tree is dying, then we must let it die. so putting something on it should not allowed.

Cindy Naomi's position is to decide as a board if we want the donation or not.

David if we did then we would set a precedence that others can plant a tree or put a bench in.

Deb on the island we had talked about a nest. Can we have something on the island that would attract the eagles.

David I don't think we could attract the Eagles back like that

Cindy and he thought the beginning of the trail was to bare, not further on.

Cindy made a Motion to not to accept the donation for planting along the River Walk trail as offered by Ray Dionne. It is a Conservation Trail and that is how it should be maintained. 2nd by David Ross, all in favor

IX. Additional business brought up by the Conservation Commission: None

X. Non-Public Session NH RSA 91-A:3, II (d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale or lease of a real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties who interests are adverse to those of the general community.

Cindy made a motion to adjourn @ 6:35 2nd by David Ross