

HOOKSETT CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Monday, March 13, 2023

4:30pm

Hooksett Municipal Building

35 Main Street

Town Council Chambers

I. Open Meeting: 4:33pm

II. Attendance/Introductions: Cindy Robertson – Chair, JoCarol Woodburn – Vice Chair, Philip Fitanides – Member, Robert Better – Member, Deborah Miville – Member, John Pieroni – Alternate, Alan Stein – Alternate, Sheena Gilbert – Planning Board Representative, Alex Walczyk – Town Council Representative

III. Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Public Input (None)

V. Consent Agenda

- i. Administratively Complete Expedited Minimum Impact Wetlands Permit Application; NHDES 2023-00447

Motion to approve the consent agenda made by Alex Walczyk, seconded by JoCarol Woodburn. Motion passed.

VI. Meeting Minutes Approvals

02/13/2023 & 02/21/2023

Sheena Gilbert abstained due to not being present at either meeting.

Motion to approve the February 13, 2023 minutes made by Alex Walczyk, seconded by Deb Miville. Motion passed.

Phil: Line 188, where I asked about police monitoring, is there an update on Alex checking with Town Council?

Cindy: We will discuss later.

Motion to approve the February 21, 2023 minutes made by Alex Walczyk, seconded by Phil Fitanides. Motion passed.

Alex: Just a note for future that you can approve/vote on minutes even if you weren't in attendance.

VII. Invoices (None)

VIII. Appointments (None)

45 **IX. Other Business**

46 i. Clay Pond Game Cameras (Continued Discussion)

47 **Cindy:** I called Fish and Game, but the person I was looking for was not in when I called, and I
48 couldn't leave a message. I will call back again. I also reached out to Molly Thunberg with DES
49 since Bear-Paw had said they may have some funding, and she provided this email response.
50 She reviewed our Clay Pond monitoring report and saw that there was an issue with shooting.
51 She clarified we couldn't use the funding (through the Local Source Water Protection grant
52 program) since it is specifically for water sources. She did say though that "if you can procure
53 game cameras so we can collect evidence of the trespassers, NHDES can offer legal
54 enforcement support; we can take the evidence to the Attorney General's office to prosecute
55 the trespassers." So, DES is interested and will take this seriously if we get evidence. I have not
56 done anything more with the game cameras yet. I can continue working on getting in touch
57 with Fish and Game before we proceed with cameras.

58 **Deb:** What happened with the funding?

59 **Cindy:** When she first told us about the funding, it was broader, but when she took a closer
60 look, she realized it was more specific on what it could be used for and only applied to water
61 sources. But if we get evidence, she will help us bring it to the Attorney General.

62 **Al:** I think we are making progress, so once we touch base with Fish and Game to see their
63 recommendation about game cameras, then we should move forward.

64 **Phil:** Maybe Fish and Game can put their own warning sign up too?

65 **Alex:** It would be asking too much for the Hooksett Police to control it, so this helps. It would be
66 helpful too to have the exact camera types and cost breakdowns to have ready for next
67 meeting as well to review.

68

69 ii. Friends of Hooksett Trails/Earth Day Clean-up

70 **Cindy:** JoCarol put together the flier that was emailed out to all our volunteers for Earth Day. Al
71 has some information related to Heads Pond.

72 **Al:** I've done a lot of work at Heads Pond on behalf of Kiwanis. At the far end of the trail, the
73 last half mile, there are a lot of young birch trees that collect snow and fold down onto the trail
74 and make it impassable until the snow melts. They are about 2-4 inches in diameter. In my
75 opinion, it should be made so it is easily passable even during the winter. After a heavy wet
76 snow, you would need to go out to identify the trees that are going into the trail, which I've
77 gone out a few times. I may try to go back out Wednesday after tomorrow's storm to look at
78 the rest and mark them with surveyor's tape. Then in the Spring we could have volunteers go
79 out to help take the trees down.

80 **Cindy:** How many trees?

81 **Al:** About 50.

82 **Cindy:** I think our volunteers could help, it would be nice to have a project for them, and then
83 we have an offer from Stantec.

84 **JoCarol:** We received this email from Stantec; they do an event each year where they help out
85 in communities, and they have 12-15 people that come to help.

86 **Cindy:** Once the trees are marked, I think we should definitely send out to our volunteer group
87 to help in the spring.

88 **Phil:** You need someone like an arborist to make these decisions. You need to cut the right
89 trees. You also cannot just leave the stumps, you will get off-shoots that grow out. It is more
90 work than what is being proposed in the long run.

91 **Al:** The trees are in the woods to the side, and it is only when the snow falls that they go into
92 the trail. I do have experience with trail maintenance, and yes, it is not a permanent solution,
93 but it will help for 5-10 years or so. They are 2-4 inches diameter, it is selective cut.

94 **Deb:** If we ask Kiwanis to do work on the trail, why have you come to us instead of Kiwanis this
95 time?

96 **Cindy:** I think Al was just making observations and had just discussed with both us and Kiwanis,
97 so I wanted to bring it up.

98 **Sheena:** I have not seen anyone complain about it. Is it actually a problem or could we let them
99 grow until they are sturdy enough and will not bend? There are so many invasive species that
100 pose a larger issue, we should really try to keep the native birch trees.

101 **Al:** The birch trees are always flexible even once more mature. There is an argument both ways.

102 **Sheena:** Where this is more of an aesthetic thing, I don't think it should be a priority unless in
103 the future we get more complaints. I'd rather have volunteers helping remove invasive species.
104 It seems like a preference and a non-issue right now.

105 **Deb:** Who does the trail belong to, and can we cut trees on the trail?

106 **Cindy:** I think the Town actually owns it, but Kiwanis maintains the trail. It is not against the
107 easement to cut trees at least. It is trail maintenance.

108 **JoCarol:** We should use the Friends of Hooksett Trails group, and also have them help clear
109 bittersweet in the future.

110 **Sheena:** Do we have the Earth Day plan in place, speaking of?

111 **Cindy:** Yes, we are cleaning up Clay Pond.

112 **JoCarol:** There were two notices that have been sent out as well about Earth Day and the
113 election, and we will send more. Kiwanis already had a flier so hopefully it will be a big event.

114 **Cindy:** Should we ask for an RSVP or whoever shows up, shows up? It may be nice to know who
115 is reading them.

116 **JoCarol:** There is a barcode on the flier, but that information goes back to Kiwanis.

117 **Alex:** Back to the tree cutting, Al, you weren't planning on cutting them down anyways, right?

118 **Cindy:** I think he has already cut a few.

119 **Al:** I was going to mark more this Wednesday.

120 **Alex:** I would ask that you take a picture to see the severity of the issue and how badly it is
121 blocked. Tomorrow is a good opportunity if it's a situation when it snows.

122 **Al:** If I can, I will take pictures and put surveyor's tape on trees.

123 **Cindy:** You can send those to Bridgette who can forward to the group then.

124 **JoCarol:** To organize the volunteer group then too, we could pick a day and time.

125 **Sheena:** What projects do we have that would have substantial before and after? After Earth
126 Day, Clay Pond will be a great one, but is there another area to focus on too?

127 **Phil:** The pond/beach behind Walgreens maybe.

128 **Cindy:** Tony with Heritage Commission had posted on Facebook that the Town had promised
129 the family that if they donated it then it would be kept as a park. It is now very overgrown.
130 There was discussion but we just didn't have the ability.

131 **Deb:** The town said no for cleaning it. They said there were too many bugs, there are beaver
132 problems. I asked if it could be control burned but they said there are too many animals.

133 **Cindy:** In prior pictures there was a park with a beautiful pond with sand, and now you can't
134 even see it. There was a grant that came up and I sent it to Tony and Mike, but they did not
135 have the time either. Mike had an idea to get the Tap House involved. If someone gave a
136 breakdown of what it would involve to clean it up, then we could take it from there and look
137 into grants, but it got dropped.

138 **Deb:** Back 15 years ago, Parks and Rec sent a letter to the easement holder to clean it up, but
139 we did not hear back that I am aware.

140 **Al:** It was part of the hotel back in the day. They then sold or rented it to SNHU as a dorm and
141 the students ruined it, and then the pond gradually become overgrown.

142 **Cindy:** I'll share Tony's email of photographs of what it used to look like.

143 **Deb:** The other day there was talk on Facebook about it and Mr. Barrett said their office is
144 where the old hotel was located.

145 **John:** There would need to be a commitment to maintain it too, you don't want a bunch of
146 work to be done and then just have it overgrown again. Also, how are you going to use the
147 area? Will Parks and Rec oversee it if it is a park?

148 **Deb:** It is also different management of the town now from when I first looked into it.

149 **John:** What will the purpose be though, how it will be utilized? It seems like a major project.
150 What about the trail on Quimby, is that a project Stantec could help with?

151 **Cindy:** We are still working on the invasive species out there now.

152 **JoCarol:** Years ago, we partnered with Comcast to clean up an area, maybe we could do that
153 again?

154 **Alex:** It seems that there is always some sort of a roadblock that comes up with the pond. But
155 for Lambert Park where the pavilion is, Parks and Rec was talking about putting in a horseshoe
156 pit or some other type of activity there too. The question is what you want done, how you want
157 it done, and how you would pay for it. The boy scouts may be helping with that.

158 **Cindy:** Maybe Stantec would hypothetically help with that too.

159 **John:** Another area is Pinnacle Park, it seems there is a good amount of washout on the trail.
160 Water bars would be helpful. It is one of those things that once it starts, it quickly picks up
161 speed, and gets worse and worse. It is very concave so it will take some digging to fix.

162 **Cindy:** We could do that, that is not hard. Stantec should know what to do, I will ask. If DPW
163 helped us before, they could help again I think.

164 **Phil:** How much land area are you speaking of for the washout?

165 **John:** It is the width of the trail itself, the old carriage road up to the top. About a quarter mile
166 or half mile.

167 **Phil:** The DoT has a formula of grass that they use on the highway that will dig in and not wash
168 out.

169 **Cindy:** That would not work, people walking on the trail would kill the grass. Vegetation would
170 not work.

171 **Deb:** Another suggestion for a project is stairs at the beginning of Heads Pond because of the
172 washed-out slope to make it easier for some people to get down there.

173 **Bob:** Maybe the Conservation Corps as well could help.

174 **Al:** There was thought given to that by Kiwanis to make it more accessible. It can be done. The
175 town regraded the parking lot about 2 years ago and it has not washed out since. It would be a
176 big project.

177 **Cindy:** You would still have the ramp, but stairs to the side as well. I think JoCarol should
178 respond to Dan with our ideas. It is not until June, there is time to decide.

179 **Al:** John and I will take a look at Pinnacle when it is raining to see how many and where for
180 water bars.

181 **JoCarol:** Let us know when you are going. You can email Bridgette and she can forward it out.

182

183 iii. Operating Budget Update

184 **Cindy:** We are over budget a bit for printing and postage, and training. It is covered by the
185 Conservation fund. It is good to have this, we can have this backup for when we are going over
186 our budget for next year.

187

188 iv. Volunteer Appreciation Event

189 **Cindy:** This is April 13th, 5:30-7:30, at the library.

190

191 **X. Additional business brought up by the Conservation Commission:**

192 **JoCarol:** Voting day is now March 28, be sure to vote.

193

194 **Cindy:** Also, I got an email from Christine that CIP requests are to be submitted by April 1. I
195 asked if we could submit later so that we can wait for the election results on the warrant
196 article, and she said we could submit by April 14. At Town Deliberative Day there was an effort
197 made to reduce the amount in our warrant, to cut by half and then take the \$125,000 out of
198 the reserve fund, which was approved. So, the warrant article is now for \$125,000 instead of
199 \$250,000.

200 **John:** How did the recommendation go?

201 **Cindy:** It was approved 7-1. It does not go back through Council; it is decided right then. So, if it
202 doesn't pass, we could look at ARPA funds, or maybe even impact fees? Hopefully we won't
203 have to worry about it though.

204

205 **JoCarol:** Please RSVP to the Kiwanis flier that was attached to the email sent out for Earth Day
206 so that they have the head count.

207

208 ***Motion to adjourn at 5:31pm made by JoCarol Woodburn, seconded by Cindy Robertson.***

209

Motion passed.

210

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