

HOOKSETT CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Monday, June 12, 2023

4:30pm

Hooksett Municipal Building

35 Main Street

Town Council Chambers

I. Open Meeting: 5:05pm

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

III. Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Public Input

V. Consent Agenda

- i. NHDOT; Re: Hooksett, 44098– Bridge Preservation Project; 5/18/23
- ii. Proposed Hooksett Riverwalk Trail – Phase IV Abutters Notice; 6/1/23

Motion to approve the consent agenda made by Alex Walczyk, seconded by Sheena Gilbert. Motion passed.

VI. Meeting Minutes Approvals

05/15/2023

Motion to approve the May 15, 2023 minutes made by Alex Walczyk, seconded by Phil Fitanides. Motion passed.

Phil: Do we have the information about the loan?

Cindy: Yes, and we will discuss later on.

VII. Invoices

- i. Stantec, Merrimack Riverfront Trail Design, 5/19/2023, Invoice #2084473, \$5,172.50

Motion to approve Stantec invoice dated 5/19/2023 in the amount of \$5,172.50 made by JoCarol Woodburn, seconded by Alex Walczyk. Motion passed.

VIII. Appointments:

- i. Dan Tatem, Stantec [*Cancelled*]

IX. Other Business

45 i. Riverwalk Phase IV Updates

46 a) Re: Merrimack Riverfront Trail System Project, Phase IV Trail
47 Construction Contract Award Recommendation

48 **Cindy:** Happy to say that we got two bids. The lowest bidder was John E. Neville Excavating, Inc.
49 Dan has worked with them before, so he is very happy that they submitted a bid.

50 **JoCarol:** They have done a lot with Goffstown trails, they were done really well.

51 **Cindy:** So, we will take a vote on approving the contract for Phase IV to be awarded to John E.
52 Neville Excavating, Inc., as recommended by Dan Tatem at Stantec.

53 **Sheena:** Is this within our budget?

54 **Cindy:** It is, but just to clarify: the warrant article was for \$385,000. This came in around
55 \$425,000, but we know that the warrant article did not cover the stuff we ran into with
56 connecting with Allenstown. So, it is actually lower than expected, but still over that \$385,000.
57 About \$40,000 over what the warrant article was, but we are well within what was anticipated.

58 **Sheena:** And we also had the additional funds earmarked, is that correct?

59 **Cindy:** We have the \$80,000 from the RTP grant, and then our \$20,000 match. Then we have
60 \$125-150,000 from the General Fund/unexpended fund balance. We said we would put in
61 \$35,000 from the Conservation Fund initially, and then we have \$20,000 we were going to put
62 in from the Land Improvement Fund. So there are three sources for funding; from the Town
63 unspent fund, from the warrant article, the grant, and the Conservation Fund and Land
64 Improvement fund. Since it went to bid, we can use the Land Improvement fund. I believe
65 Christine will take care of it and balance it out for us.

66
67 ***Motion to award the Merrimack Riverfront Trail Project Phase IV project to John E. Neville***
68 ***Excavating in the amount of \$425,530, made by Sheena Gilbert, seconded by Deb Miville.***
69 ***Motion passed.***
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71 **Cindy:** And we are still on track to have this completed by the Fall. We are checking on a
72 document André needs to sign, but otherwise they can start right away. Hopefully by October it
73 will be complete, and we will have a big ceremony.

74 **JoCarol:** Also, I met Phil Arnone to mark where the benches would go. Two on the Brick Kiln
75 loop, and the other two at the end of the trail right before where the new construction will
76 start. DPW placed the benches the next day, and I went out again to see them all set up, we
77 posted on social media and got a lot of good responses.

78 **Cindy:** And when it is finished construction, one will be moved up in that area, further up. Then,
79 for the loam, DPW did not want to handle it. Jeff McNamara is going to take it and we signed
80 that contract. It is not a gift, we are allowing him to accept it on the terms it is to be used for
81 agriculture and that it cannot be resold. Naomi from SPNHF read over and approved the
82 agreement.

83 **Phil:** What was the amount? Town taxpayers are unable to get any?

84 **Cindy:** Dan told us last meeting. And correct.

85 **Phil:** Could we develop some type of website dedicated to the Riverwalk Trail? A lot can be
86 found on Google but a lot of people are looking for hiking trails.

87 **Cindy:** Everything is on the Conservation Commission page on the Town website already, and
88 we also have the blog.

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ii. Riverwalk Trail Signage

Cindy: On College Park Drive, there is a blue sign labelled “District Court.” We should look into adding a sign to the same post that points to the Riverwalk Trail. Across from Merrimack Street.

JoCarol: It would be a brown sign for conservation areas. Also one for Pinnacle, and Heads Pond.

Cindy: I’m not sure who we would talk to though.

Sheena: College Park Drive is a town road as far as I know.

Alex: I think it would be DPW, I don’t know if the Town Council would need to approve it.

Cindy: We should put it back on the August agenda and research more.

Sheena: I can check with Dana (Code Enforcement Officer) too.

Phil: Maybe a brochure could be put together about where hiking areas are in town and to have them given to businesses for display, such as the liquor store, Hooksett Kawasaki, others.

JoCarol: It would need to be dedicated to conservation areas only, but we could do that.

Sheena: Farm stands, the auto dealerships too.

Deb: For the loam amount, I was reading the contract, and it does say quantity of 2,340.

Phil: The quality of that loam, it used to be a pig farm in that area, at \$20/yard, that’s almost \$50,000 worth of loam.

iii. Stantec Community Day

Cindy: It is June 19th. John Pieroni is taking charge of that. 12-15 people from Stantec, they are coming out for 4 hours to put in a water bar and attack the bittersweet. Anybody that can help, please feel free.

JoCarol: John just sent an email; it is from 1-5pm.

iv. FY 2024-25 Budget Request

Sheena: We did talk about making changes to the printing costs. We exceeded the initial budget of \$50, it was pulled from another budget when we went over.

Cindy: We can justify it, let’s increase that. What should we increase to?

JoCarol: I think \$350.

Cindy: I think we should get rid of the scholarship and reduce to \$1. And make our postage \$50.

Sheena: For the cameras, should we budget under new equipment for that? It’s a good question whether or not, and if they get destroyed. Also to be educational and informative for what is out there. If we don’t use it, we could get rid of it for the next year’s budget. I think at least ask.

Cindy: I don’t know if I can truly justify it. Let’s leave that as is.

Motion to request an increase for printing from \$50 to \$350, and for postage from \$15 to \$50, for the FY24-25 budget made by Cindy Robertson, seconded by Sheena Gilbert. Motion passed.

Cindy: For the warrant article request form, this is our standard \$30,000 we ask for every year.

Deb: And that’s to upkeep our properties in town.

132 **Cindy:** We could completely deplete the account with the Riverwalk Trail alone. We can only
133 use that account for items that are bid out, so the money sits there otherwise.

134 **Sheena:** We are potentially thinking of Heads Pond. Wouldn't that go out to bid?

135 **Cindy:** We are very far out from that though. There will be a lot of bike trails too, it will be
136 different. We can ask for it or wait a year and not ask for it this year. We would just copy the
137 one we've submitted in the past. Maybe we need to think about bidding out more. It would not
138 hurt, so let's put in for it. We will want to decide if we plan to expend what is in the account
139 with the Riverwalk Trail with the expectation that it will be replenished.

140 **Alex:** I think they are wanted by July 14 to get a head start. Sooner is better than later. I'm
141 inclined to do it; it is easier to take it out later if we decide differently in August or September
142 we can take I out.

143 **Cindy:** Bridgette, can you put that together for us, exactly what we have submitted in the past.
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145 v. Quimby Mountain Invasives Control Site Walk Update

146 **Deb:** I did go out on Saturday. It looks really good out there. You can see the trees; they are not
147 all dead from the bittersweet. There's something called mullein that seems to be taking over
148 though with the bittersweet gone. He had said there was a couple last year, but this year about
149 a hundred. So he was going to spray for that too. He suggested, though, about by the gate there
150 is a huge depression and no one except with a 4-wheeler can get out there. There is no place to
151 park. It is dangerous on that road. So, Paul suggested that the gate could be moved further in,
152 the mud filled in, and make 3-4 parking spaces there so that people can use it more.

153 **Cindy:** We have discussed this a bit before too. Let me research the history from when Quimby
154 was acquired. I don't think it would be bid out though, maybe just something that DPW could
155 do. But, if we cut down trees and make a real trailhead, then maybe.

156 **JoCarol:** Or if there is a grant available.

157 **Cindy:** Thank you for going out there, Deb. I'll ask Paul if he has any pictures.
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159 **X. Additional business brought up by the Conservation Commission:**

160 **Cindy:** I have to talk with Manchester Water Works about the gate still.

161 **Alex:** Following up on the cameras, I did send an email about whether to get it or not. I was
162 about to order when I saw it had a visible flash. It is not a huge flash, an infrared "low glow"
163 flash. There is also a "no glow" flash. We had talked about whether or not we wanted a flash
164 since it might give away the camera location. I did a little research, some cameras are more
165 expensive with no flash. But, JoCarol mentioned that they are mostly there during the day time,
166 so then the flash is a non-issue.

167 **JoCarol:** Well, it is technically dawn to dusk for access to the area. I don't think they're going
168 out at night to shoot, or it is unlikely.

169 **Cindy:** I think stick with the one we previously agreed to.

170 **Alex:** Then once we get it, Dan offered assistance?

171 **Cindy:** Yes he did offer to help. I did want the gate to be up though to coincide with the camera.
172 I will send an email to follow up to make sure they are still putting the gate, and to ask him
173 when. Do we start paying the subscription as soon as we get the camera?

174 **Alex:** I think so.

175 **Cindy:** Maybe hold off on purchasing then until we know when the gate is going up or how long
176 it will take.

177 **Phil:** Do we allow smoking on trails?

178 **Cindy:** Yes, people are allowed to anywhere outside. We cannot stop people from smoking.

179 **Sheena:** I am going to the Bats of New Hampshire presentation tomorrow, from Nature
180 Groupie, I will see what information I learn. I am hoping we can talk to easement holders to see
181 if we can put up bat houses. A lot of people don't realize they're pollinators. There are 12
182 species native to NH, inflicted with the white-nose syndrome. I can check the stewardship plan
183 too. I'll bring back what I find out.

184 **Cindy:** No meeting in July so we will be back in August.

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186 ***Motion to adjourn at 6:08pm made by Cindy Robertson, seconded by Alex Walczyk. Motion***
187 ***passed.***

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

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194 *Minutes respectfully submitted by Bridgette Grotheer, Community Development.*