

HOOKSETT CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Monday, November 13, 2023

4:30pm

Hooksett Municipal Building

35 Main Street

Town Council Chambers

I. Open Meeting: 4:35pm

II. Attendance/Introductions: Cindy Robertson – Chair, JoCarol Woodburn – Vice-Chair, Deborah Miville – Member, Phillip Fitanides – Member, Robert Better – Alternate, John Pieroni – Alternate, Alan Stein – Alternate (left at 6:15pm) Alex Walczyk – Town Council Representative, Sheena Gilbert – Planning Board Representative (arrived 4:38pm, left 5:45pm)

Cindy: We have three alternates and only four full members when we need five. I've asked Al if he would step up to a full member.

Confirmed that Al will need to see the Town Clerk. Town Council will then appoint but he does not need to be present at their meeting.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Public Input (None)

V. Consent Agenda

- i. Transfer – Conservation Account, 10/23/23, Finance Department

Motion to approve the consent agenda made by Alex Walczyk, seconded by Deb Miville.

Motion passed.

VI. Meeting Minutes Approvals - 10/23/2023

Motion to approve the October 23, 2023, minutes made by JoCarol Woodburn, seconded by Alex Walczyk.

Phil: There are 5 pages of minutes. From line 147 to around 355, I'd like them amended. There are discrepancies from if you transcribe the minutes. Some questions that were made at the meeting are not reflected in the minutes well enough to answer the questions. I used artificial intelligence and have the video transcribed word for word. I'd like to amend it and bring it back at the next meeting.

Cindy: Minutes are an overview, they are not verbatim. If something is not accurate, we can amend that, but they do not have to be verbatim. People can watch the video if they want every detail.

Phil: When you watch the video you also cannot hear and understand people.

Cindy: I watched it, and I had no problem.

45 **Sheena:** I want to say the same thing, minutes are intended to capture the essence of the
46 conversation. It would be very long if it was every word.

47 **Cindy:** We can table it if you provide your notes. We are not going to have the minutes be
48 verbatim. Are there specific questions that you want to see reflected? Is there anything that is
49 wrong?

50 **Phil:** Yes, I'll have to put that together and send it in.

51 **Cindy:** Again, it's a snapshot. We're looking for typos and inaccuracies when we review.

52

53 ***Motion to table the October 23, 2023, minutes to the December 11, 2023, meeting made by***
54 ***Phil Fitanides, seconded by Sheena Gilbert. Motion passed.***

55

56 **VII. Invoices**

57 i. John E. Neville Excavating - Merrimack Riverfront Trail System Phase IV Payment
58 Request #4, \$99,458.37

59

60 ***Motion to approve Stantec Payment Request #4, Merrimack Riverfront Trail System Phase IV,***
61 ***for John E. Neville Excavating in the amount of \$99,458.37 made by Sheena Gilbert, seconded***
62 ***by Alex Walczyk. Motion passed.***

63

64 **Sheena:** Is this the remainder of the work?

65 **Cindy:** I don't know. Shown in the email, there are some supply issues with materials. The
66 bridge will not be completed until the Spring. I think there is more to come.

67 **Al:** There is a spreadsheet at the back that shows the remaining balance.

68

69 **VIII. Appointments:**

70 i. Cindy Herbert - Head's Pond Memorial Bench - ***Tentative***

71 **Cindy:** She wanted to put a memorial bench, but we haven't heard from her. Let's try to reach
72 out and leave it on the agenda for one more month. Al mentioned there is a need for a bench
73 here, so if we don't hear from her, we'll think of other ways.

74

75 **IX. Other Business**

76 i. Riverwalk Phase IV Updates

77 • Change Order for Contract Time

78 **Cindy:** We spoke about this with the invoice approval. It is pushed out because of the supplies
79 to the first week in May, I believe. Dan is suggesting the third week in May for the grand
80 opening, which is our next topic.

81

82 • Grand Opening/Celebration

83 **Sheena:** That gives us a good amount of time to plan. I was asked by someone on the Planning
84 Board if we have talked to Allenstown and Pembroke about connecting the trails and the grand
85 opening. Do we know their timeline?

86 **Cindy:** They were hoping for this Fall or Spring as well. Their own DPW is doing it, so it is taking
87 longer, it's rough right now. They do want to be a part of the grand opening so pushing it back
88 to May will give them some more time.

89 **Sheena:** I think it would be great to have it with multiple towns. I know Tony Lacasse is
90 interested in organizing a run as well.

91 **JoCarol:** Do we want to do a Saturday morning; most have been Thursday afternoons around 4.
92 There's a lot of work that goes into organizing a run though. Busses, shuttles, entry, sponsors. I
93 don't think our group should take on the run.

94 **Sheena:** We could also pull members from the other towns and put together a committee if we
95 did want to organize it.

96 **JoCarol:** We should also think about graduations around that time, and Memorial Day.

97 **Alex:** How confident are we? It will not be done early, and we don't want to risk it not being
98 finished.

99 **JoCarol:** The only part that isn't complete is the bridge, the main trail is done.

100 **Cindy:** Are we picking a Saturday because of this run? We can do the grand opening on a
101 different day than the run, like a Thursday, and then they could have the run on Saturday.

102 **Sheena:** Attendance could also be tough depending on the day, are we trying to make a big
103 deal of it or is it just important to the people involved.

104 **Cindy:** We want it to be big. The last grand opening was the best turnout we have had yet. It
105 showed a lot of people where the trail was.

106 **JoCarol:** If we want to invite someone to speak, we need to now. Does anyone have ideas for
107 who to invite?

108 **John:** What if we had a few tentative dates to see which would work best for invitees. Ask
109 people which dates would work best for them by giving them flexibility. Or, just have one date
110 that we are locked in on.

111 **JoCarol:** Maggie Hassan is an idea for someone to invite. At our last grand opening, Kathy
112 Northrup had someone from the New Hampshire Historical Society speak who was good.

113 **Al:** Were the construction costs using state funds, or federal funds?

114 **JoCarol:** Technically the RTP grant is federal money.

115 **Al:** We could definitely invite a senator or representative if it was federal. They have PR people
116 to contact. How many people came last time?

117 **Cindy:** Probably about 50. And if we have Allenstown too, we can estimate to have more people
118 show up.

119 **Phil:** I meet a lot of people that are unaware of the trail and they want to know where it is. If I
120 have to quickly explain where it is and show on the computer, but there is no address. I tell
121 people to go to the courthouse as an address and then to park at the end of the parking lot and
122 walk toward the rowing club and kiosk. Is there a better place to tell them?

123 **Cindy:** They can park at the kiosk. They can park anywhere at the end by the dog park.

124 **Sheena:** You can Google the "Hooksett Riverwalk Trail" and it comes up.

125 **Cindy:** So, we should reach out to senators, governor, congressman. SNHPC, Bear-Paw.

126 **Bob:** Also, the Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF).

127 **Sheena:** Maybe a professor of environmental science or something at UNH.

128 **Al:** SPNHF may have a list of speakers as well.

129 **John:** Also, the governor's council.

130 **JoCarol:** So, Cindy will speak, Dave Hess probably.

131 **Sheena:** Our own Town Council?

132 **Cindy:** They did not show up last time. We will invite them. And other town employees.

133 **JoCarol:** We'll make a flyer to send out and email, post on Facebook.
134 **Bob:** What about our list of volunteers?
135 **Cindy:** Yes, we'll email them and ask them to bring people.
136 **Sheena:** Maybe we could work with local photographers as well to showcase and promote. A
137 wedding, the courthouse is right there.
138 **Phil:** Members of the House of Representatives as well, Senate, Department of Agriculture.
139 **Cindy:** JoCarol, if you can send out information to the big names, and then for December's
140 meeting we can think of the others we want to invite.
141 **Sheena:** So, Thursday, May 16 at 4 PM. Weather should be nice for people to walk the trail.
142 **John:** Where do you hold it?
143 **Cindy:** At the entrance where the two benches are so that people do not have to walk the
144 whole trail.
145 **John:** Does DPW have a golf cart? They could bring people who cannot walk out to see the trail.
146 **Cindy:** They might. Technically, motorized or wheel vehicles aren't allowed out there, strollers
147 and wheelchairs are the exception. We can think about it, we'd need permission from SPNHF.
148 **JoCarol:** We had really nice photos at our last event. Everyone splits up tasks, we have
149 microphones, podiums, tables, balloons, flowers, etc., and I have been speaking with the
150 woman that sang the national anthem at the Kiwanis 5k and she would be happy to sing.
151 **John:** The Boy Scouts could bring the color guard too.
152 **Cindy:** And then the Girl Scouts could do something. I will reach out to Girl Scouts.
153 **Sheena:** I'll check with the Boy Scouts.
154 **Phil:** And get in touch with the press too. We have the new Hooksett Bridge newspaper too.
155 **JoCarol:** Yes I have a list for a press release. Bridgette, if you can put together a distribution list
156 of Board and Committee members.
157
158 ii. Pinnacle Park – Bittersweet Discussion
159 **Cindy:** We are thinking about next projects. John has mentioned Pinnacle. I looked back at our
160 Quimby contract since we would need to bid it out the same way we did for Quimby. Maybe we
161 could do that in December or January, I don't know when they would begin, April or May.
162 **John:** I think it was June this year.
163 **Sheena:** The removal at the Riverwalk Trail was in April a few years ago.
164 **Cindy:** We have our Land Improvement Fund, but it has limitations. Any purchases \$0-3,000,
165 the department head can spend. From \$3,000 to \$15,000, the Town Administrator has to
166 authorize it after it has 3 bids. Over \$15,000, it has to go before Town Council. There's also the
167 single source rule if there is only one source that provides the services.
168 **JoCarol:** Bear-Paw helped us get quotes for Quimby Mountain.
169 **Cindy:** Bridgette, if you could research how we bid it for Quimby Mountain for us to look at.
170 **John:** And we should include poison ivy removal too.
171 **Cindy:** Also for other projects to think about, the University Heights trails and a trail use study,
172 mountain bike trails there. We were talking about a stewardship plan for Quimby Mountain to
173 have a trailhead and parking. There's lots of projects to come. We should make a priority list for
174 2024.

175 **John:** I just became head of the Kiwanis Trail Committee. They brought up the Head's Pond trail
176 that Kiwanis manages and oversees. Can we clarify the Head's Pond conservation area, versus
177 the Head's Pond rail trail?

178 **Cindy:** I see where there is confusion between the Head's Pond trail and the Head's Pond
179 conservation area. No, we don't want to take over the rail trail.

180 **Al:** Also looking at Head's Pond, where it ends now, the old railroad continues to Portsmouth. It
181 goes across to Chester Turnpike, and it connects to snow mobile trails, Clay Pond, Bear Brook
182 State Park. You would need easements from Manchester Sand & Gravel I'm assuming, but if
183 you want to work on connecting that trail network it's an idea.

184 **John:** To my knowledge the Town does not own the railbed though.

185

186 iii. NHACC Conference – Saturday, November 4th

187 **Al:** First, they had an executive session where they spoke about their finances. NHACC has an
188 annual budget of about \$100,000, assets of \$150,000. They have lots of resources if we need
189 expertise. Then they had a keynote speaker. It was breakout sessions and workshops, I went to
190 the fundamentals one. It went over the handbook that is given to us. Recommended to have a
191 list of all the Conservation Commission properties in town, and to have a town-wide wetland
192 assessment. There was another session about working with other boards, Hampton spoke
193 about how they have a full-time person dedicated to assisting the Conservation Commission
194 through grant funding. They also spoke about the relationship between the Planning Board,
195 ZBA, Town Council and Conservation.

196 **Cindy:** I thought we were supposed to have a ZBA representative, but we don't, I'm not sure.

197 **Sheena:** We have the Zoning Subcommittee that I'm on to represent Conservation. ZBA did just
198 increase their amount of members too. I can ask.

199 **Al:** If we're getting copies of the agendas from ZBA and Planning Board we can look at when
200 wetlands are affected ahead of time. ZBA's can have in their wording "pending positive
201 recommendation from Conservation" so they come before us. Also, to try to have regular
202 engagement with the Town Planner and Town Administrator.

203 **Sheena:** On Planning Board, we work very close with the new Town Planner Liz, and before her
204 we did with Nicholas too.

205 **Al:** Also talked about increasing outreach with social media, town website, getting names and
206 email addresses for a quarterly newsletter.

207 **JoCarol:** We do have a blog.

208 **Al:** And, to get involved with site walks when Planning Board and ZBA have them.

209 **Cindy:** Conservation does get invited but there aren't a lot of site walks.

210 **Sheena:** We just worked on the Planning Board Rules of Procedure to try and do more site
211 walks.

212 **JoCarol:** We had an intern that did a lot of work for us a few years ago.

213 **Al:** If we're interested, we could reach out to Hampton and see what their process was for
214 having a conservation coordinator position. Next, there was a meeting about Natural Resource
215 Inventory, and GRANITView which I'll show. It is done through UNH: granitview.unh.edu. They
216 recommend updating the Natural Resource Inventory every 10 years.

217 **Sheena:** The last time ours was updated was 2003. But, we've missed the timeframe from
218 budgeting for this year.

219 **Al:** There are different levels of how detailed they get. Probably in the range of \$10,000 for a
220 simpler one. Closer to six figures for more detailed.

221 **Sheena:** It's probably unlikely we'll be able to as part of the Master Plan adoption in
222 February/March 2024, but we are going to be trying to review for updates every 2 years or 5
223 years at most. We have to look at funding.

224 **Al:** It can be separate from the Master Plan as well though.

225 **Cindy:** Chester is doing theirs now. They are using Moosewood Ecological. Moosewood has
226 already assessed a lot of our properties.

227 **Bob:** When I went to this conference last year, I thought they said it was closer to \$90,000.

228 **Cindy:** I could also contact other commissions to see what their pricing was.

229 **Al:** I also spoke with someone who lives on North Candia Road, on the Candia town side, she
230 had questions about the gate and would be a good contact. I spoke with Peter DeSantis from
231 Allenstown about the Riverwalk Trail. Also, the map on the kiosk at Pinnacle needs to be
232 updated, and I'm guessing for the Riverwalk Trail too. Some professional maps would be great,
233 resistant to UV. A QR code as well on the maps so that if the trail changes, there can just be a
234 link to an up-to-date version instead of having to keep updating the physical maps. The NHACC
235 also has a photo contest which has passed for this year but they display on their website and at
236 the convention.

237

238 *Sheena spoke briefly regarding agenda item IX. v. Clay Pond Gate at this point in the meeting.*
239 *(Please refer to that portion of the minutes.)*

240

241 *Al demonstrated GRANITView and spoke about the different layers available, such as*
242 *Conservation and Public Lands, label items, soil information, dam locations, easements and their*
243 *names, wildlife corridors (minimize impact when trail building for example), water resources.*
244

244

245 **Al:** I went to three workshops, but there were a lot to choose from and a lot of information
246 that was valuable.

247

248 iv. Trail Maps/Kiosks

249 **JoCarol:** I met with Bear-Paw, and they expressed updating these was a priority. Bear-Paw may
250 be able to do it for us, I wonder. Katrina was doing these maps previously, since she left I don't
251 know who is creating them now. On our website we have a document Hooksett Trail Maps, it's
252 outdated though. Stantec does a map of the Riverwalk Trail as well.

253 **Al:** And having the QR code on the maps.

254 **Phil:** Are you suggesting Stantec create a map?

255 **JoCarol:** No, they only do the one in the kiosk that is the satellite of the trails.

256 **Phil:** We should get a map that we can hand out to the public, like at the travel center, and we
257 can give to businesses.

258 **JoCarol:** Stantec doesn't do trail maps, there's a difference between what they provide and
259 what we're talking about now.

260 **Cindy:** Updating these maps is on our list of things to do in 2024.

261 **Phil:** There's a helicopter video of the whole Riverwalk Trail on YouTube, "Hooksett #2."

262 **JoCarol:** We should approve some money to have the large kiosk and map and the Riverwalk
263 Trail updated.

264
265 ***Motion to approve up to \$350 to reprint updated maps for the large kiosk and map at the***
266 ***Riverwalk Trail before the grand opening in May 2024, made by JoCarol Woodburn, seconded***
267 ***by Cindy Robertson. Motion passed.***

268
269 **Cindy:** As an update to something that was mentioned, Liz, the Town Planner, is going to work
270 with us to get plans before us for review from the Planning Board.

271
272 v. Clay Pond Gate/Game Cameras

273 **Sheena:** I met with Officer Bergeron, she wants to look at the gate and the yellow tag. Since
274 there isn't any apparent damage, while they still should not have done it she said there's not
275 much they can charge someone with. She'll take a look and contact the people who did move
276 the gate since she has the plate and will give them a warning.

277 **Cindy:** We should also think about setting the poles in concrete.

278 **Sheena:** She encouraged that as well.

279

280 vi. 2024 Schedule

281 **Cindy:** There are two months that fall on holidays, October and November. Let's think about
282 alternative dates and discuss next month after we look at our calendars.

283

284 **X. Additional business brought up by the Conservation Commission**

285 **Cindy:** The Town owns land at Map 14 Lot 34, behind Granite Hill on Thames Road, that borders
286 our other conservation land and Bear-Paw property. We asked them to put it aside to hold for
287 us. We're talking to Bear-Paw about putting an easement on it. I'd like to start thinking about it
288 again. We're looking for the deed and the survey. If we don't have that information though it is
289 considerably more money. We should put money towards it, it could come out of the Land
290 Improvement Fund.

291 **Bob:** The land is very wet out there; I've been out there. There is a portion that was cleared too,
292 I think, last Fall.

293 **Phil:** There is some land in that area that may be developed, bought around 2000.

294 **Cindy:** The idea is to preserve it. Apparently, a developer was looking at it two years ago, so
295 there is some urgency. If we have the survey and deed, I would like to look into it. If we don't
296 have the survey or deed, we would need to have another conversation about it.

297 **Phil:** Where it says Stantec survey Head's Pond \$37,000 (*referring to Consent Agenda, Finance*
298 *Department Transfer*), if Stantec has the deed, we should have a copy of that.

299 **Cindy:** For that, when they did the survey there was a discrepancy in the boundary line with
300 property of Manchester Waterworks and the school district, which shows in the survey. We've
301 let them know and the survey has not been filed yet since we are waiting to hear from the
302 school. We've reached out a few times. Jeff Burd wanted the survey too when he was here last
303 month, but it's not finalized yet.

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

307

308 ***Motion to enter non-public session NH RSA 91-A:3, II (d), at 6:07pm made by Cindy Robertson,***
309 ***seconded by JoCarol Woodburn. Motion passed.***

310

311 ***Motion to leave non-public at 6:13pm made by JoCarol Woodburn, seconded by Cindy***
312 ***Robertson. Motion passed.***

313

314 **Cindy:** One more thing to discuss was we received some calls regarding hunting at Clay Pond,
315 asking if we could open the gate during hunting season or provide a copy of the key. I told him
316 we could not give him a key. Anyone can hunt on the property still, they just can't drive their
317 trucks in. To open it for hunting season though, it is technically year-round depending on what
318 game you are hunting for. If we do it for one hunting season, we would have to for all, and then
319 why have a gate. I think it is too soon to have it open, we just put it up and locked it.

320 **Phil:** A thought is if someone shoots a deer or moose, how do they haul it out? Could they get
321 permission?

322 **Cindy:** That's part of hunting though is getting it out. They can dress it in the field.

323 **JoCarol:** If they contacted us could we unlock it for them?

324 **Cindy:** They really don't have long though to get the game out.

325 **Phil:** Can they gut the animal on the property?

326 **Cindy:** Yes, they can. And if they're hunting on MWW property, maybe there's another way to
327 get out there and talk with them.

328 **JoCarol:** Also, the Candia side.

329

330 **Adjournment**

331

332 ***Motion to adjourn at 6:18pm made by JoCarol Woodburn, seconded by Bob Better. Motion***
333 ***passed.***

334

335

336 Minutes respectfully submitted by Bridgette Grotheer, Community Development