

**Hampton Conservation Commission
Draft Minutes
Tuesday, October 27, 2015**

PRESENT:

Jay Diener, Chair
Barbara Renaud, Financial Administrator
Diane Shaw
Gordon Vinther
Pat Swank, Alternate
Anthony Cioffi, Alternate

Also Present: Rayann Dionne – Conservation Coordinator
Mary Louise Woolsey, Board of Selectmen

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Meeting was called to order by Chairman Jay Diener at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall Selectmen's Meeting Room.

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. Renaud to approve the August 25, 2015 and September 22, 2015 minutes with the addition of any edits provided.

SECOND: Mr. Vinther

FAVOR: 3 in favor, 0 Opposed, 3 abstained (Mr. Diener, Ms. Swank, Mr. Cioffi)

MOTION PASSED

III. APPOINTMENTS:

Charlie Gasperoni, Eagle Scout Project. Review of potential kiosk maps for White's Lane/Town Forest. Mr. Gasperoni gave a brief update on his project of installing kiosk maps for White's Lane area. He thanked the Commission members who attended the walk thru of the proposed site for the kiosks, as well as the location of the trails on Saturday, October 24th. He updated the Commission that the clearing of the Warren's Trail is almost complete with the exception of a few finishing touches. His purpose for appearing before the Commission was to have the proposed sign markups reviewed and approved. He is planning to meet with the sign company on Friday, October 30th, and Mr. Gasperoni's goal is to complete the trail and kiosk display by Thanksgiving.

He displayed examples of three signs that will be attached to the kiosks. One for White's Lane, one for Warren's Trail and one for Jonty's Lane. The signs will be 38"x24" and made of aluminum. There will be a map depicting the trails and the town forest. Also, there will be a bit of history of Robert White, as well as rules for visiting the area. There will also be room for the Conservation Commission to add updates or posts, if they would like.

Commission Discussion:

Mr. Diener suggested printing the history of Robert White in a larger font. Mrs. Dionne also suggested that the map be a little bit larger to fill up the space. Mr. Vinther inquired whether the map is to scale, and Mr. Gasperoni confirmed it is. Mr. Diener suggested that Mr. Gasperoni add history for Jonty's Lane and Warren's Trail, as he has done for White's Lane. He commented that a little bit of education for people who are not aware of the history is a good thing.

There was a discussion with regards to the QR code on the bottom of each Kiosk where visitors can scan on their phone which will link to the Conservation webpage. Mrs. Dionne inquired if they link it to a portion of the Commission's website, and that website is later updated, how would that impact the QR code. She requested that Mr. Gasperoni inquire with the sign company if there is a way to update the code if it changes. She suggested perhaps there be a sticker on the sign that can be removed/added if the link should change. Mr. Vinther asked what trails are depicted on the map, and he expressed concern for private property owners. Mr. Gasperoni stated that they are all town owned property trails, however, not all have names. His goal is to try and show people there are other smaller trails out there they can walk on that are town owned. The Commission all agreed that this project has been well done and they would assist Mr. Gasperoni in any way he needs to help facilitate his completion date.

Jordan Causer, Eagle Scout Proposal. Batchelder Pond bench replacement and installation of a picnic table. Mr. Causer appeared before the Commission to present his proposed Eagle Scout project. His proposed project consists of removing six old benches and replace with five new benches that are composed of recycled grey plastic with a drift wood look to them. They will be 4' long with permeable pavers under each bench. The pavers are going to be 18'x4' and also have an antique grey look to match the benches. The sixth bench being removed will be replaced with a four seat thermoplastic picnic table. The table is composed of thermoplastic that will not rust and will remain durable. It will be a forest green color and will have spaces to allow for rain water to flow through. The picnic table will be securely mounted to the ground with a center post and one mount holding it up. Mr. Causer is also proposing to add a granite sign with Batchelder Pond engraved in it. He would like to attach a bronze plaque mounted to the granite post displaying credit to the donors and supporters of this project.

Commission discussion:

Mr. Diener inquired how many contributors and sponsors is he planning on having. He suggested Mr. Causer consider having a separate sign acknowledging the names of sponsors and contributors be placed on the benches, rather than the granite post. He feels that people will be able to see the signs more easily there.

Mr. Diener asked if the slab in front of the benches would be one solid slab. Mr. Causer responded that it will be composed of separate 2x2 pavers with stone dust. The Pavers are meant to keep the ground from receding. The hope is they will help prevent ground erosion. Mr. Causer also informed the Commission that the pavers and stone dust are permeable and allow water to drain through.

Ms. Renaud stated that coconut logs were recently installed in the area and inquired if this project will effect that area. Mr. Causer confirmed his project would not interfere with that area. He stated the benches will be 9' away from that area, and the table will be approximately 18' further back. He also stated that they will be secured with surface mounts, not bolted into concrete. So in the future if there is a need to replace a bench it can be removed easily and be replaced. Also, as Planning Board member Mr. Lessard had requested, the hardware will be stainless steel.

Mr. Diener stated that this project, as with any other project, whether there are temporary or permanent impacts within 50' of wetlands buffer, would need a town wetlands permit. To be consistent with other property owners, digging holes is an impact, so you will need to file a wetlands permit. Mrs. Dionne informed Mr. Causer that she would be available to help him with this permit, and there is an application fee for that, and the Conservation Commission would support waiving the application fee for this project. However, they cannot waive the notice to the abutters fee.

Mr. Diener inquired what Mr. Causer's timeline is for the project. He responded that he would like to begin by November 30th and complete the project by April 15th. Mr. Diener informed him the next Conservation Commission meeting is in late November. He suggested Mr. Causer submit his application in time for that meeting. The following step would to go before the Planning Board meeting in December, and if it is approved, he would receive the approval that evening. Mr. Causer informed them he will be appearing before the School Board on November 10th. The Commission acknowledged this is a great job and project.

IV. APPLICATIONS: There were no Applications

V. OLD BUSINESS

- 1) Review 2016 Warrant Articles-** Mr. Diener informed the Commission that he and Mrs. Dionne met with the Planning Board for a second time to discuss the proposed warrant articles. After much discussion with the Planning Board regarding the contiguous area warrant article they both compromised and decided to remove the minimum of 75% lot area from the warrant article, and state that there can be no impacts outside of the contiguous area. Also, it was agreed to remove temporary impacts from the article. They have decided to remove the septic setback warrant article. The Planning Board wanted to know what further protections were benefited by increasing it 25'. Mrs. Dionne did a lot of research and found there is no concrete data available to quantify this. There was a discussion regarding the warrant article adding Taylor River as a Prime Wetland. Mrs. Dionne stated that in 2008 Hampton Falls moved to protect 2/3rds of the Taylor River as prime wetland. Mrs. Dionne requested that some members be available to discuss this and be prepared to answer any questions during the Deliberative Session. Lastly they

discussed, the warrant article that would provide a 100' buffer to select 1st through 4th order streams and their tributaries. Only certain streams were selected to be protect (Ash Brook, Drakes River, Little River, Nilus Brook, Old River, Taylor River, and the Winnicut River) - The buffer restrictions would be as follows:

- 0-25' – No Cut/Vegetated buffer shall remain intact and undisturbed, cutting permitted only if to remove invasive species by hand.
- 0-75' – No fertilizer application and no structures
- 25'-75' – Limited cut area – Permitted to cut live trees with a diameter of four and one-half (4-1/2) inches or less, measured four and one-half (4-1/2) feet above ground level is permitted.

The buffer restrictions listed above were modeled after the 100' buffer ordinance in Portsmouth, NH and NHDES Shoreland Protection Act. This warrant article has undergone the most substantial change because the Planning Board was not comfortable with increasing the freshwater buffer to a 100'. The main reason was because the PREPPA report that was being used to support this revision spoke specifically about 1st through 4th order streams. The Planning Board was more receptive of this modified version where select streams were specifically name as being protected.

2) Land between Route 101 and North Hampton – Update

Mrs. Dionne updated the Commission on the mailing she sent out 2-3 weeks ago. A letter went out to all landowners to inquire whether they would consider a land donation to the Town of Hampton or allow a Conservation Easement on their property. She informed the Commission that she did receive a phone message from an owner that had received the letter and wanted to further discuss it. Mrs. Dionne went on to state we may not hear from many people, and if that is the case, what should be the next step. Ms. Swank inquired how many letters were sent out, and Mrs. Dionne responded she sent out about a dozen. Mr. Vinther questioned if several homeowners come forward and agree to donate the land or allow a Conservation Easement, would the Commission be able to pay for the new Deed and recording. Mrs. Dionne responded, yes, they can afford this, as it would cost between \$15-25 for recording fees, and the Town Attorney would draft the new Deed.

3) Update on Wetlands Permit notes on tax card

Ms. Swank & Ms. Renaud updated the Commission that they each have been going through the Planning Board Logs and attempting to identify addresses in town that have had an approved Town wetlands permit and entering the data into a database spreadsheet. The two spreadsheets will eventually be merged so that it can then be added to the tax cards. They informed the Commission when you're dealing with historical data and you are looking for paperwork it takes considerable time to go through old files and investigate to obtain the proper information. Mrs. Dionne stated that the intent is to add a note to the tax card of properties that have had Town wetlands permits in the past. Also, the online GIS mapping system has an ability to upload documents and make them available to online GIS users She also remarked that Ms. Shaw has been a great help in scanning old plans and documents and

preparing them for electronic use. She thanked Ms. Swank for her help in organizing some of our files. Mr. Diener acknowledged Ms. Swank & Ms. Renaud for their hard work and noted it is a great project.

- 4) **Ice Pond Dam Update:** Mr. Diener informed the Commission they have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Department of Historical Resources and Army Core of Engineers, agreeing that the Ice Pond and Ice Pond Dam are eligible to be on the register of historical places. He went on to say there is no obligation to do it, and that it is the Town's decision whether or not to proceed. He also stated they agreed to place a sign about the history of the Pond and Dam. He confirmed the MOA has been signed by all parties involved. The Army Core of Engineers has contacted Frank Richardson, and he has agreed to release the NHDES wetlands permit. Also, Stevens Engineering sent the additional documentation the Town required for the job to be put out to bid. That is being reviewed by Mrs. Dionne along with the DPW. The next step is for the Town Manager and DPW to put together a bidding document suitable to be put out for bid. The goal is to have it out prior to the end of this year. Mr. Diener explained to the Commission they will lose the funds if they are not used by the end of the year. The Town Manager, Mr. Welch and the Town Attorney are in the process of putting together a new Warrant Article that will extend the \$90,000 allocated, so it will not expire. He went on to explain that this Warrant Article will only be applied if we do not have a contract signed by the end of the year. Mrs. Dionne reiterated that if we need that warrant article, it will extend longer than a year as initially done.

- 5) **Hampton Member for SWA (Southeast Watershed Alliance):** Mr. Diener reminded the Commission that as discussed last month, there is a seat that is currently available at the SWA for a Hampton Member. The group meets quarterly. Their purpose is to set up water quality standards for communities all over the state to be used as guidelines to ensure their water quality standards are adequate if not more so. Mr. Cioffi inquired if this is a State of New Hampshire group, and Mr. Diener confirmed it is. Commission agrees to discuss this further at a later meeting.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- 1) **Soil Testing Program – 2016:** Mr. Diener began the discussion by revisiting the fact that there is so much fertilizer usage not just in our town but throughout coastal communities. He went on to recommend one thing that can be done is to encourage homeowners to test their soil, because along with the results would come fertilizer recommendations. University of New Hampshire (UNH) will test soil, but you have to wait a bit for the results, and it is not the easiest way. He wonders if there is a way to bring the soil testing process to the people. There is a discussion of perhaps tying it in with the annual plant and rain barrel sale in May. Mr. Diener would like to see if someone from UNH could be on site and provide testing of homeowners' soils. The tests would be for organic content. The Commission would like to facilitate this process. He went on to say there would be a charge in the range of \$15. In order to encourage town residents to test soil, he would like to set up a fund allocated for this. Mr. Cioffi also stated that Agway in Hampton Falls tests soil. The hope is to educate residents and to reduce fertilizer usage or at the least to use the proper amount of fertilizers. Mr. Cioffi went on to say the educational part of it is important. Mr. Diener asked the Commission if this is

something they would like to further explore. Ms. Swank wondered how people would know about this. Mrs. Dionne said they would have to prepare some advertising. There is a discussion about creating a brochure illustrating the impact of residents over fertilizing along with some visuals. Ms. Woolsey suggested putting a slide on Channel 22 and the website.

2) CONSERVATION COORDINATOR AND CHAIR UPDATE:

Mrs. Dionne updated the Commission on the Community Rating System (CRS) project she and the Town Planner, Jason Bachand, are working on. CRS is a program with FEMA regarding flood insurance. The Town of Hampton itself is not involved in insurance, but it has over 1750 policy holders. Mrs. Dionne and Mr. Bachand attended a workshop last week in Kennebunkport, Maine. It was a review of what Cape Cod has been doing and it was helpful. She went on to say there are still some things that they have to work through that were not covered at the workshop. Ms. Renaud inquired how many property owners in Hampton are in the special flood zones. Mr. Dionne informed them the Board of Selectmen and the Beach Village District have a list of approximately 4100 residents in Hampton.

Mr. Diener announced to the Commission that the grant application for an intern has been submitted to the Davis Foundation. Ms. Woolsey inquired how long an intern position would be for. Mr. Diener replied the position would be for approximately six weeks.

VII. TREASURER'S REPORT: Ms. Renaud informed the Commission that in the third quarter they spent about \$3,000 for Ice Pond for all the permits. The expenses went in on September 15th but were not posted until October, so about it is about \$3,000 less than the balance reflects. Ms. Renaud went on to say 3rd quarter expenses included rain garden expenditures along with the mowing of ice pond for a total of \$450. She also reported that they received \$35 in interest and expended \$41.47 for recording fees for donated marsh land. Mrs. Dionne informed the Commission that the Stephens and Associates fee has been reduced by \$1,300.

Mr. Cioffi informed the Commission that he along with Mr. Bachand are involved with the East Coast Greenway Rail Trail. The rail trail is from Maine to Florida. Approximately 1/3 of it has been built. The trail runs approximately 17 miles from Portsmouth to the Mass border. He went on to state that Newburyport, as well as Salisbury already have already built trails. This is a big effort with the Department of Transportation, as well as the Rockingham County Planning Commission and there is some national funding. There is a project underway with Rockingham County Planning Commission and senior University of New Hampshire students. The plan is for the students to create a conceptual design for the trail. There will be coordination and communication with DRED on what the restrictions will be. Mr. Cioffi feels this is a great opportunity to learn about what DRED would like to do with our marshes. This is an information project that students will work on and it will cost no money. He concluded by mentioning that there may be a resource meeting soon, and if Mr. Diener and/or Mrs. Dionne could attend it would be useful. Mr. Diener thinks it would be beneficial to be involved in the process early enough so their concerns can be addressed.

VIII. ADJOURN

MOTION: Ms. Renaud made the motion to adjourn at 8:50 p.m.

SECONDED: Mr. Vinther

VOTE: 5 in favor, 1 abstain (Mr. Diener)

MOTION PASSED

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission will be held on November 24, 2015.

Respectfully Submitted:
Cheryl Hildreth, Recorder