

Hopkinton Conservation Commission
November 21, 2023 Meeting
Held at the Hopkinton Town Hall

11/21/2023 Minutes – Accepted 2/20/24

Present: James Newsom, Ron Klemarczyk, Rob Knight, Bob LaPree, Jonathan Bradstreet;
Alternate: Katherine Mitchell. Joining at 7:08, Bonnie Christie.
Absent: Melissa Jones, Molly Hardenbergh, Stephanie Kratsios

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by James Newsom.

1. HCC public and non-public minutes for October 10, 2023 and minutes for 10/23/23 were accepted as presented.
2. HCC mail: No mail was received.
3. Treasurer's report: The Chair reported that at the end of October the balance in the Conservation account was \$161,307, and that we had received LUCT of \$18,355, interest income of \$2.50, and expenses of \$5,695.60. Town Forest account was \$26,669, which reflected \$4.38 interest income for the month.
4. Parmenter gift of 17 acres on Beech Hill Road: Rob Knight was thanked for his work in facilitating this gift.
5. Unsealing minutes: Now that the Parmenter project is completed, Rob Knight reviewed the sealed minutes and made a motion to unseal the following minutes: 10/18/22, 9/20/22, 4/26/22, 3/15/22, 1/18/22, 1/19/21, 10/27/20, 9/15/20, 6/2/20, 1/21/20. The motion was seconded by Ron Klemarczyk and passed unanimously.
6. Tyler Landing update: Ron Klemarczyk reported that work on the driveway and parking area is completed, and Bohanan Farm has agreed to move the ramp to Tyler Landing. Ron reported that the work cost less than expected. Rob Knight made a motion to authorize payment of the \$6,344.70 bill. The motion was seconded by James Newsom and passed unanimously. Discussed how to remove the disintegrating black plastic ground cover left by the farmers, as well as fencing. It could be done by a volunteer day, or perhaps by the Intereact Club.

At 7:08 Bonnie Christie joined the meeting.

7. Ongoing maintenance fund: Bob Lapree recommended that we set aside some of the Blackford gift as a fund for ongoing maintenance at Tyler Landing and for other projects to improve river access, such as a ramp and picnic table in Contoocook Village. Discussed the restrictions on the Blackford gift. Rob Knight explained that the donor's intent was "for use in acquiring conservation land, preferably with concurrent recreational use, and improvements on the conservation land to facilitate recreational use i.e. the canoe launch and parking area." per an email exchange 11/10/21. This language was in the original draft agreement sent to the town by John Blackford's attorney, but at some point the agreement language was changed to "... for conservation and related purposes" and this was the language in the town meeting warrant article. Rob felt that this change gives the HCC more flexibility in how the Blackford money is used, but that we should consider the

donor's intent, especially since the donor is alive and quite interested in what we are doing with the money.

Regarding setting aside part of the Blackford gift as a maintenance fund, agreed that it might be better to discuss this when we have a project that might potentially use the money or when the money is running low.

8. Monitoring: Rob Knight reported that the monitoring is complete for 2023 with no violations found, and thanked Bonnie, Molly, Katherine, and Jon for doing the monitoring and filing the reports. James Newsom visited the Mikita (Herrick) property to monitor the conservation easement areas on the property and check on the town owned property. All were okay. Mr. Mikita is planning a survey of the property which would include marking the conservation areas and town property.
9. Rollins mowing: Ron Klemarczyk reported that Mr. Mock bush hogged the property and the bush hog was sufficient to do the work. Bonnie Christie made a motion to pay the Mock bill of \$1,400. Jonathan Bradstreet seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
10. Invasives at Hawthorne Forest: Rob Knight found during the monitoring that invasive knotweed and bittersweet has come back. The state LCIP representative recommend that we apply for a grant to hire a contractor to remove the invasives. Rob Knight volunteered to investigate the grants and contractors available to remove the invasives.
11. Trails update: Kearsarge Avenue - Rail Connector: Ron Klemarczyk reported that the trail is done and surfaced with stone dust.
12. Zoning wetland committee: There is nothing to update.
13. Natural Resource Inventory: Bonnie Christie said the NRI will be useful for the wetland committee as a public education tool.

James has received an invoice for \$500 from Elise, and made a motion to pay the invoice. Jonathan Bradstreet seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussed final edits to the NRI. Rob Knight has minor corrections. Bonnie Christie would like to add a photo of a mural, and replace the section on Abenaki history. Discussed whether to include the adjective "unceded" to describe the former Abenaki lands in the town. Some felt "unceded" was needed to accurately describe the land; others felt that the word is controversial and unnecessary for the purposes of the NRI.

Bonnie made a motion to remove the word "unceded" from the Abenaki section. Ron Klemarczyk seconded the motion and Bob Lapree requested a roll call vote. Voting in favor of the motion: Katherine Mitchell, Rob Knight, Ron Klemarczyk, James Newsom, Jonathan Bradstreet; voting against the motion: Bonnie Christie and Bob Lapree. The members voting to remove "unceded" did not feel the word was necessarily inaccurate, but felt it was unnecessarily inflammatory.

Bonnie moved to give final approval of the NRI with the changes discussed. Rob seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
14. Public presentation of the NRI: Bonnie will work on scheduling Elise to make a public presentation sometime before the town meeting in 2024. Presentation will probably be in the evening.
15. Transfer station fencing: James Newsom sent a letter to Neal Cass some time ago requesting that a fence be installed to keep trash from blowing over the bank into the wetland. James will follow up with Neal.
16. NHACC dues: James Newsom made a motion to pay the NHACC dues of \$350. Ron Klemarczyk seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

17. Policy on commissioners making public comments as individuals: The draft policy was tabled until next month.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 PM. Next HCC meeting is scheduled for 7:00 on December 19, 2023 at the Town Hall.

Minutes submitted by Rob Knight.