

Hopkinton Open Space Committee
Wednesday, February 15, 2023
Hopkinton Town Hall 7:30 p.m.
Minutes – Accepted 5/17/23

Administration

Present: Dijit Taylor, Lucia Kittredge, Ron Klemarczyk, Rob Knight, Erin Vanden Borre, Sabrina Dunlap
Absent: Bob LaPree

Old Business

January 18, 2023 public and non-public minutes were accepted.

Dave and Kathy Dustin, Lots 224-29 & 225-6 Conservation Easement (Five Rivers): Dijit reported that the Drinking Water Trust Fund board has not yet met to consider increasing the project grant by an additional \$58,000 for a total of approximately \$175,000. Paperwork has been requested to support the grant for transaction costs. Dijit will take care of that. The NRCS has reached out to offer additional funding from their NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (Merrimack River Watershed Council). 5RCT would need to become a qualified applicant and OSC would need to review the grant restrictions with the Dustins to see if the restrictions are acceptable to them. LCHIP continues to appear to be a good option for the needed additional funds.

OSC skill sets and succession planning: Dijit reported that according to Neal Cass, an OSC committee is required per the original warrant article at town meeting 2003.

Committee organization: Dijit wishes to step down as committee chair, but would be willing to stay on as a committee member. Discussed reorganizing committee membership by moving an alternate to full membership, and adding two new alternates so there would be a total of three alternates. Dijit has contacted and gotten a positive response from a particularly qualified potential committee member, and has been contacted by another person who would be a good addition to the committee.

Property priority list: Dijit is working on updating and formatting the list.

Closer links to the Planning Board: No updates.

New Business

Protecting conservation properties: Discussed methods to protect Town Forests or other conservation properties from being sold or developed by a town meeting vote. A conservation easement held by Five Rivers or another qualified land trust is the best protection, but may not always be available since land trusts have limited capacity. A conservation easement held by the Conservation Commission might be an alternative, or having a deed restriction. Neither would offer perfect protection, but either might encumber the property enough to effectively prevent development.

Updates

Wetland Committee: No updates.

Class VI roads committee: There will be a public hearing March 13 on a request to upgrade Old South Road to Class V status. Lucia reported that the Class VI roads committee had recommended Old South Road remain a Class VI road since large areas of conservation land abut the road. Taking a formal position at the hearing is outside the purview of the OSC, but hopefully the Conservation Commission will take a formal position at the hearing.

Economic Development/Downtowns and Trails UNH study: No updates.

Trails Committee: Mapping the trail through Contoocook should wait until the town acquires from TDS the property necessary to complete the trail. The website and maps are all up to date.

Ron made a motion, seconded by Lucia, to adjourn to non-public meeting per RSA 91 A:3 ii (d) Acquisition of real estate. Vote was unanimous in favor. Committee adjourned to non-public session at 8:33 p.m. Committee returned from non-public session at 9:07 p.m. Ron made a motion, seconded by Lucia, to seal the minutes until the projects discussed become public or are removed from consideration. Vote was unanimous in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rob Knight, Secretary

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 15, 2023 7:30 p.m.