

Conservation Commission	February 21, 2023 - DRAFT
Town of Hampton Falls	Town Hall

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING DRAFT MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

- a. Ms. Hill called the meeting to order at 6:30pm

B. ROLL CALL

- a. **Present:** Mary Ann Hill, Chair, Ann Reis, Karen Ayers, James Kibler, Shawn Hanson, Paul Melanson, Robert Wiener
- b. **Absent:** Cathy Golas, Nancy Roka, alternate, Lou Gargiulo, Selectman's Rep
- c. **Staff:** Brianna O'Brien

C. NEW BUSINESS

D. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Lincoln Akerman School:** Jill Swasey has put forth a proposal for a nature trail on 19 acres of school property
 - i. They are applying for funds through NH Partnership for Schoolyard Action Grants. The grant pays for the installation. The partnership between NH Project Learning Tree, NH Fish and Game, and NH Audubon Society.
 - ii. Ms. Hill met with Jill a few weeks ago to go over what she has and walked the property. Two very wet areas. All the underbrush has been cleared along a path that is already there. It is an easy walk- not quite a nature trail. Ms. Hill and a science teacher reviewed the grant application before it was submitted. The application is going through Fish and Game and Ms. Hill knows Fish and Game like turtle habitat and vernal pools, so she suggested adding that into the application as well as mentioning adding native plants. The application was submitted.
- b. **Raspberry Farm:** A new proposal from RCCD for summer of 2023 to spray invasives arrived. It is the same as last year, \$2,740.00
 - i. They want to cut and herbicide at the same time.
 - ii. No vote is taken but the Commission agrees that they want this work done and will pay this bill.
 - iii. Mr. Hanson asked what is the end goal with this work of combating invasives. He mentioned that the Commission is spending a lot of money on invasives. There are invasives everywhere so it is important to have a long-term management plan.
 - iv. Ms. Ayers asked if there were any plans to plant anything native in place of the invasives. If the invasives are being removed, they have to be replaced with something native.
 - v. Ms. Hill answered that it is important to work against the invasives to foster the local natural ecosystem. The Commission should be looking to find a good source for healthy natives.

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- vi. New Hampshire State Forest Nursery has a catalog of natives. They are often very cheap. It may be too late to order now.
- vii. Ms. Ayers also suggested milkweed.
- viii. Ms. Hill mentioned that the dominant plant around the pond is a speckled alder. It is a typical riparian plant.
- ix. Ms. Ayers mentioned that she found a lot of tennis balls in the field. It was discussed what could be done about that.
- x. The Commission discussed the dog waste station: to do or not to do
 - 1. Karen Anderson did not think it would be a good idea.
 - 2. Ms. Ayers did not find any dog poop this week. She suggested leaving it for now and seeing how it goes. The signs are a good first step.

c. Citizens Guide:

- i. Everything is finished. The formatting should be all set and the map should be all set as well. Ms. O'Brien is happy to do the legwork of getting it printed but would need guidance from the Commission as to how it should be distributed.
- ii. Getting all 9 pages printed and sent to every homeowner is one option.
 - 1. Mr. Kibler questioned if that is cost-effective.
 - 2. Ms. Ayers suggested that one costly mailing every 10 years is worth it to get everyone the information that the Commission wants them to have.
 - 3. It could be cut down to 7 pages if that saves money.
 - 4. Mr. Kibler suggested that it could be a one page mailer or post card that indicates that this document exists and directs homeowners to the Commissions website with a digital version of the document. It could also advertise that the Commission is seeking new members.
 - 5. Canva is good for printing.
 - 6. Ms. O'Brien will talk to the post office about pricing for mailings and look at printing costs. It would be nice to have some printed for election day.

E. COMMUNICATION TO BOARD MEMBERS

- a. Planning Board: The plan for 12 Lafayette is down to 3 stories with the restaurant and retail both smaller. They still need 4 variances
- b. ZBA:
 - i. 51 Depot project has been approved with conditions with regard to the pavers and drainage.

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- ii. 5 Kensington Rd. (the old Merrill property). They are looking to make it into three lots. They are almost out of time as they have asked for a number of continuances.
 - iii. 38 Depot Rd. did get the variance they applied for relating to septic. They want to turn the existing space above the garage into a full apartment.
- c. The bridge between Hampton and Seabrook is going to be rebuilt.
- d. Depot Landing:
 - i. The town received recommendations from UNH- the idea of a dock is not recommended. The emphasis is going to have to be on restoring it. It was discussed to add barriers to prevent people from walking out into the marsh to allow it to regenerate.
 - ii. Karen Anderson applied for a grant for a kayak sling there.
 - iii. The Town has the parking and informational signs and are waiting for the ground to thaw for them to be installed.
 - iv. Ms. Hill believes there should be a gate to keep people out after the area is closed (an hour after dusk).
 - v. These efforts keep coming back to the questions: who is supposed to do the work, who is in charge? The Conservation Commission has an interest in protecting the marsh and it is technically conservation land but it is Parks and Rec's responsibility.
- e. Prime wetland waiver: Logging operation at 109 Kensington Road.
 - i. Mr. Hanson and Ms. Hill went to see the land, it was very wet. They decided that it was not appropriate to allow them to log, so Ms. Hill wrote a letter to the effect and NHDES denied their waiver.

F. OTHER

- a. Greenhead traps need to be put out. The Commission will reach out to David Gandt's Girl Scout Troop for more information. He has quoted the Commission \$1750 to put out 50 traps with 10 new traps at \$100/trap.
 - i. The Conservation Commission started this as a project several decades ago. But has questions about the effectiveness and cost moving forward.
 - ii. There are concerns about winter storage as well.
 - iii. What does Dragon do?
- b. Membership- renewal and/or resignation
 - i. Mr. Wiener is renewing
 - ii. Ms. Golas is renewing
 - iii. Mr. Melanson is going to change to an alternate
 - iv. Mr. Kibler is resigning, he is moving.

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- c. Roadside cleanup- They will look at the week before school vacation. It is not so much a single day event. The Commission will send out an email so people can sign up for roads and they can do it on their own time. The Commission will look to have a table at the Depot on April 15th with birdhouses and the Hampton Falls Citizen Guide.
 - i. Leftover, unwanted bat boxes could be installed at Raspberry Farm.
- d. NHDOT has extra money and is looking for projects of town importance. They're soliciting ideas from all Town departments. Fighting invasives are a good option- Crank Rd. Rte 1, Nason Rd. and Marsh Lane are areas with invasives that could use attention.
- e. ARM project suggestion- Ms. Hill is looking for restoration ideas. She shared her idea to remove some of the phragmites from the town forest and put it into the marsh ditches once they are not viable for ditch remediation, instead of mowing the marsh grass adjacent to the ditches.
 - i. Ms. Ayers suggested dredging the pond at the Raspberry Farm.
 - ii. Mr. Hanson suggested sharing ideas via email.

G. FINANCIAL

- Fund Bal: \$160,939.03
- 2023 Budget: \$10,900 which is less than what was asked for but not significantly less. They reduced one of the miscellaneous categories because the funds had not been used previously. The Commission had originally proposed \$12,500.
- Conservation Land Capital Reserve Fund beg. Bal. \$45,148.67 Current Balance ~ \$92,000.

H. MINUTES

- a. January 10, 2023 Minutes
- b. Mr. Hanson moved to accept the minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Kibler. Motion passed.

I. ADJOURNMENT

- a. Mr. Melanson moved to adjourn at 7:57pm, seconded by Mr. Hanson