

**Minutes for the Regular Meeting of the  
Walpole Conservation Commission  
July 12, 2021**

**Members Present:** Alicia Flammia, Lewis Shelley, , Steven Dumont, Laura Hayes, France Menk Cheryl Mayberry (Selectboard Liaison), Peggy Pschirrer (Selectboard Member), Jean Kobeski (Secretary)

**Members Absent:** John Peska

**Seating of Alternates:** Peter Palmiotto, Gary Speed

**Visitors Present:** Kara and Peter Dexter

**Call to Order:** Alicia called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall, first floor.

**Review and Approval of Minutes:** Steven moved to accept the May 3 minutes. Peter seconded, and all voted in favor. June 7 minutes were left unapproved because the meeting was an informational meeting due to the lack of quorum for voting purposes.

**Public Business**

**Treasury:** Mason Expendable        \$469,406.47  
                  Mason Non-expendable    \$19,866.75

**Correspondence:** Alicia received informational flyers from the NH Charitable Foundation, Monadnock Conservancy, and NH Audubon.

She also received a letter from Kara Dexter expressing an interest in joining the Walpole Conservation Commission as an alternate.

**New Business**

**Membership Vacancy:** Alicia announced that Jackie Kenson has left town, leaving a vacancy on the Commission. She explained that since Kara submitted a letter of interest, she could fill that position, or one of the three current alternates, Peter Palmiotto, Gary Speed, or Myra Mansouri could move into that spot. Peter expressed interest so he will fill Jackie's vacancy and Kara will become an alternate.

**Old Business**

**Relicensing Presentation:** Alicia recapped last month's presentation by Kathy Urffer of the Connecticut River Conservancy on the dam relicensing. She stated the CRC is planning a number of events to spread information and encourage community support and involvement. On July 17 there will be a Portage Paddle and Parade starting at Herrick's Cove at 8:30 and ending around 12:15 at the put-in below the dam. You can get more information at [www.ctriver.org](http://www.ctriver.org).

**Boundary Marking Date:** September 25 and 26 were chosen as boundary marking dates. Steven said they can probably get two groups of volunteers to do that. Alicia stated there is plenty of equipment for two groups.

**Other Business**

**National Scenic Byway Funding:** Alicia stated she submitted the letter of interest in June and received confirmation of receipt. Next step is to wait until levels of interest, funding, and awards will

be. Alicia and Cheryl said they would be on alert for notification from the Southwest Regional Planning Commission.

**Trail Subcommittee:** Steven reported that the committee received the maps. He asked Lew how the backs of the maps are coming along and would they be ready for the next subcommittee meeting on Wednesday. Lew said at least some would. Then they would be ready for printing. Alicia asked if they would be available both electronically and on hard copy. Lew said that was the intent. Maps could be available on the website and Facebook page, hard copies in the office.

Steven also reported that the Grossman's grant is in and they have received several clarification questions, which is a good sign. They will be notified in the fall, and money will be distributed next year.

**Trail Clean-up:** Alicia asked if the group would want to do trail clean-up in the fall or summer. Steven said the subcommittee wants to assess the trails and prioritize locations. Steven said at the next subcommittee meeting they will discuss a plan for workdays in October perhaps. They will be both clean-up and trail maintenance. He said he would like to schedule them according to Lew's schedule because he wants Lew to show how to properly do any cutting on the trails that is necessary.

Lew said the work would mostly be maintenance of what is already there. He said he replaced the Mason Forest gate today and that the road from the parking lot is very overgrown. He said he thought that is one trail that will need work.

Kara suggested that, if they are going to do trash pick up, it might be better to do it in the spring, when litter from the winter is unearthed. Alicia said that litter pick-up would be done along with trail maintenance, and they should do it whenever it's needed.

**Reservoir Dam:** John reported via email that the NH DES dam chief will be in Walpole on the 23rd of September to do a field walkover of the Mill Pond and Reservoir dams. Fuss and O'Neill have provided all the modeling and data completed to date. DES is reviewing the data in order to determine classification of the dam. He and Peter will attend the walkover. Alicia said she thought the classification had already been determined; Peggy said it has not.

**Fanny Mason Forest:** Peter and Lew will meet with Alex in August.

France reported that Matt Tarr will get back to her about place and time on July 20th.

Lew said rain delayed finishing the Walker Road bench. He said it may end up as a two-sided bench.

Peter stated the Conservation Commission should be concerned about the new street lights illuminating the town. They are very bright. While they should be facing downward, they project light horizontally. Peter said the matter was brought before the selectboard. Peggy said they have asked the utility company to use lower wattage lights and have them face downward. Steven said North Walpole is facing the same situation; it goes against the Dark Sky Alliance, which promotes light fixtures that minimize skyglow.

**Walker Road:** Peggy reports that she still has community members voicing complaints about Walker Road. She said some people feel locked out by the gate and many want vehicle access to the river to put in kayaks and canoes. Gary stated the main complaint he hears is also that people feel locked out.

Alicia said that the WCC meetings are public meetings, and people should come to these, rather

than go to the selectboard, to have conversations about this and other properties the Commission is charged with managing. Alicia said the WCC is legally bound by the deed, which states no cars are allowed to drive down to the river. She stated the Commission is working toward having a public conversation about why they can't just throw gravel down and let cars go down there. Lew asked if they are going to have that public discussion. Alicia said yes, after they gather more information about the property. She spoke to Barbara at the NH Association of Conservation Commissions and got names of people who could do natural resource inventories and possibly some engineers, who could get involved.

Laura suggested putting another article in the Clarion, which gives more detail about the deed. Gary suggested putting a poster on the kiosk that explains the deed restrictions and the reasoning for no cars on the road. Peter pointed out that people get their information from a variety of sources. Perhaps a shotgun approach - Clarion article, Walpolean article, town website, information on the kiosk at the same time will reach more people. But it would be important to focus on what people CAN do on the property rather than what they are restricted from doing. He restated that the challenge down by the river is that, when the river is high, it isn't very accessible. And if they had a state access they would have to give over the property to the state, which they are not eager to do.

Lew stated that the road could be improved down to a point, which would make walking kayaks and canoe down to the river a bit easier. As it is, people can walk around or over the gate to get down there. It might be possible to build some type of walkway to the river, but it would often be underwater. Lew stated permitting might be needed for that. Gary agreed that surepacking the road part of the way down would make it easier to walk boats down. Peggy felt that would satisfy some of the people who have expressed displeasure with the current situation.

Alicia will contact Jeff Littleton for a natural resource inventory and others who could assess the property in order to prepare for a public forum. She will look into the cost of these studies.

Alicia asked if there are files from a few years ago with information on the property that can be shared with those doing the study. Peter said there is a lot of information that was collected for the grant.

Lew asked if the information for the kiosk would be ready soon. Alicia and Peter said they would work on that together; Lew said it could be 11"x17". He will install it when it is ready.

Lew revisited his idea of a pollinator garden at the top end of the trail to have something for people to appreciate.

**Adjournment:** With no further business to discuss, Alicia adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

**The next meeting will be on Monday, August 2, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Hean Kobeski, Recording Secretary

lighting

\*\*\* These minutes are in draft form until approved by the Commission on August 2, 2021.