

**Minutes for the Regular Meeting of the
Walpole Conservation Commission
October 2, 2023**

Members Present: John Peska, Peter Palmiotto, Alicia Flammia, France Menk,
Wendy Grossman

Members Absent: Lewis Shelley, Steven Dumont

Alternates Present: Kara Dexter, Nicole Adams

Visitors Present: Steve Dalessio (Selectboard Liaison), Jean Kobeski (Recording Secretary),
Don Sellarole

Call to Order: John called the meeting to order at 7:05 in Town Hall. The meeting was recorded.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Wendy made a motion to approve the September 11, 2023 minutes. John seconded and all voted in favor. Motion carried.

Public Business

Correspondence: John said the Commission received a letter from the Connecticut River Conservancy expressing interest in attending a meeting of the WCC to talk about the dam relicensing. John will invite Kate Buchman to the December meeting.

Financial Report: John sent around the financial spreadsheet he received from Rich Kreissle.

New Business: John welcomed Nicole Adams to the Conservation Commission as the newest alternate. Nicole will serve as the Commission's liaison to the Hooper Board.

Old Business

2024 Budget: Peter submitted the proposed budget for next year to the Selectboard. He added \$1500 for Rail Trail Maintenance and \$1,000 for an intern. He said there was \$2650 for dams fees and \$2,000 for dam maintenance in the 2023 budget and asked if that money can be moved to the Commission's General Fund since it was not needed for those purposes. Wendy also asked if more money for trail repairs could be added to the budget. Steve Dalessio said the select board members took a first look at budgets last week. They will meet with Peter in December to discuss the WCC budget.

Fanny Mason Clean-Up: Alicia stated that the person who previously cleaned the rest area for a flat fee did so once/year and gave the Commission a list of work that needed to be done. John said garbage there has increased and commissioners agreed that it should be cleaned more frequently. Kara stated she could do a weekly 10-15-minute clean-up for the same amount of compensation.

Peter made a motion to hire someone to pick up trash at the rest area for the rate that was paid in the past and request it from the Fanny Mason Fund. Alicia seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Motion carried. Kara said she would go to Town Hall to make necessary arrangements to start the work.

Cranberry Meadow Bog: John stated that there is still a question of ownership. A discussion ensued about where commissioners might find more information about it. Steve Dalessio said they can check the tax parcel. If no one is paying tax on the property, the Town of Walpole owns it. Wendy said she would do some research.

John stated that in May, 2019, the DES sent a Notice of Concerns and recommendations for remediation to Mark Houghton, Fire Chief.

John sent a copy of the DES letter to Mark Hubbard. Mark told John he would need a permit to clear cattails if done with machinery.

Reservoir Dam: John stated the dam is cleaned up and ready for inspection.

Nerrie Easement: The WCC agreed to pay the Monadnock Conservancy \$7500 for the Nerrie Easement in 2016. It was explained that the money is used for legal costs for monitoring the property. It pays for legal defense of the conserved acreage. The money has not yet been paid because the Nerries added property after that agreement and the easement wasn't in place. The Conservancy is now requesting the money but the commissioners are unsure of the status of the easement. Steve Dalessio stated that if the easement isn't in place, the Commission should wait to pay it. It is not paid to pay for the easement; it is earmarked for protecting the easement. The Nerries have delayed the easement and McBride said it may not be until 2025/26.

Alicia said she would invite Ann McBride of the Conservancy to the December meeting to explain this process further and the Commission's optional powers that she noted in an email to Peter and Alicia.

Gateway Update:

1. France will reach out to Steven Dumont about the sign for the kiosk.
2. The gate is unlocked.
3. There is less than \$1,000 left in the budget.
4. Kara said the signs are on the gate.

Other Business

Walpole Trails Subcommittee:

1. Rob Westover attended the meeting and confirmed that the Hooper Institute board is setting up a committee to discuss (new) bike trails in the Hooper Forest.
2. Sharon Tuller will keep the map box stocked.
3. October 21 - bridge repair at Fanny Mason Forest
4. Mill Pond work delayed until next year.
5. Sharon Tuller expressed concern that the spillway would affect Reservoir Woods. Steve Dalessio said Sidney Craven has been involved in the discussion since this is his property.

Rail Trail: Wendy said she will verify expenses for next year.

Peter sent a letter to the Trustees of the Trust Fund requesting the \$5,000 for the RTP Grant. Rich Kreissle will take care of it. Wendy said the work should begin this week and Lew projects it will be finished at the end of October. Commissioners thanked Wendy and her husband, Will, for all the work they did on this grant project.

Other:

Planning Board Workshop Update: Peter and Wendy attended the workshop to discuss the natural resources chapter of the Town's Master Plan. They said the last time this was written was in 1998 and this section of the plan addressed conservation lands, the Rail Trail, and lands that should be targeted for conservation. Peter and Wendy will continue to work with the Planning Board to update the information

Gateway Budget: It was decided to fold the remaining money into the General Fund and closeout the Gateway account.

Announcements:

1. Kara announced that there will be a PFAS meeting at the Walpole Congregational church October 11 at 6:00. France stated she would attend.
2. Wendy announced the NHACC annual meeting Nov. 4 at Pembroke Academy.

WCC Website: Wendy said the website needs to be updated. France offered to do it. She will be meeting with Kelly on Wednesday.

With no further business to discuss, John adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

The next meeting will be on Monday, November 6, 2023.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Kobeski, Recording Secretary

** These minutes are in draft form until approved at the November 6, 2023 meeting.