

**Minutes for the Regular Meeting of the  
Walpole Conservation Commission  
June 4, 2018**

**Members Present:**

John Peska (Vice Chair), Jackie Kensen, Lew Shelley, Laura Hayes

**Alternates Present:**

Myra Mansouri, Peter Palmiotto, Elaine Heleen

**Members Absent:**

Gary Speed, Duncan Watson, Kelli Wilson, Alicia Flammia

**Others Present:**

Peggy Pschirrer (Selectboard Representatives), Ray Boas, Marcus Lovell Smith, Sherrie Trefry (VHB), Ryan Owens, Steven Dumont (Recording Secretary)

**Call to Order:** John Peska, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:25 PM.

**Seating of Alternates:** Peter Palmiotto was seated as a regular member.

Review and approve minutes - May 7, 2018. On page 2, under "3. Merriam Forest", it should state that NH Fish & Game "came out and met with Rebecca and Lew". Also on page 2, under (4.), it should state that Jeff White's property is near the Gowdy property, it does not abut the property. On page 3, under "Other Business, 1." it should state that Myra is a member of the Zoning Board and not the Planning Board. Lew made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected. Peter seconded. With all in favor, the minutes were accepted as corrected.

**Public Business:**

1. Treasury: The Forestry account has a balance of \$2,269.00 and the Conservation account has a balance of \$9,171.14. There is no info on the PDIP accounts. John passed around information on the town trust funds including the Hooper and Mason trust funds.
2. Correspondence:
  - a. Newsletter from the Monadnock Conservancy.
  - b. Letter from the Wildlife Heritage Foundation of NH asking for donations.
  - c. NH Charitable Foundation Spring/Summer publication.
  - d. Letter from the Connecticut River Conservancy asking for donations.

**New Business:**

1. Sherrie Trefry, representing Kristopher Wilkes from VHB, was in attendance. They are working for National Grid and are seeking an expedited Wetlands Permit Application from the NH DES for work along National Grid's power line right of way in North Walpole. A power line has sagged over time and there needs to be a certain distance between the ground and the power line.

National Grid plans to remove ledge below the power line to create the required distance. National Grid needs to upgrade, resurface and regrade their existing access road, as well as create a new section of road to the site. VHB has contacted the National Heritage Bureau. There is a rare plant species in the area. About 40 plants will be removed. The National Heritage Bureau has given their approval due to a large population of said plant. There is a vernal pool and an intermittent stream in the area which will not be affected. The new road will affect 2,337 square feet of wetland. Below 3,000 square feet the NH DES allows an expedited 30 day review of the application with Conservation Commission approval. John noted that the study and report is very thorough. Myra noted that the North Walpole Village Commissioners have their own Zoning Board of Adjustment, and that VHB needs to contact them for notification as well. Lew asked what the plant species was. Sherrie noted that it is bulrush. Peter asked about the tools being used as "hand tools" noted in the application. Sherrie believes it will be power hand tools. Peter asked if anyone has been to the site and what the impact of the wetlands will be. Sherrie noted that there are pictures in the application. Peter made a motion for the vice chair to sign the application. Lew seconded. All in favor.

2. Peter introduced Ryan Owens, a Walpole residence and executive director of the Monadnock Conservancy (MC). He was in attendance to discuss options for the conservation of the Walker Road Property. Ryan said his involvement started with the recognition that with at least one of the NH State funding sources, if the state gives a grant to buy the land, the land has to be protected. This suggests a preference for a conservation easement to be granted on the land, to another organization, along with the town's ownership of the land. Ryan has discussed the feasibility of the MC or another organization being the holder. This would enable grant funding. Ryan noted that the MC and other organizations are being much more selective with the easements they choose to hold due to the growing financial demands of representing the easements. The MC is moving toward outright ownership of land as an alternate, but this does not always work for some properties. Ryan noted that if the town owns land, an easement may not be worth the effort or needed at all. A Declaration of Conservation Restrictions is another mechanism which may satisfy the state's requirements for grant funding. John asked Ray Boas about the groups intent on the property. Ray stated that the group initially started coming up with reasons why the property was a bad location for a gas station. After the application was withdrawn, they realized that someone else could purchase the property and try again. Phase two of their efforts is to purchase the land and turn it over to the Conservation Commission for protection, and to update the master plan and zoning ordinance to prevent this from happening again. Ray Boas and Chuck Shaw talked with D&C Transportation and came to a handshake agreement about purchasing the property. D&C has been very busy and Ray has not heard back with further information. Ray is looking to get a deal worked out before they aggressively ask for donations or pursue state funding. Ray said negotiations might take longer than expected but they are optimistic that a deal can be worked out. Ryan asked if the property should be appraised to make sure what D&C is asking for the property is a fair price. Ray mentioned the recent appraisal was \$161,000. D&C paid \$269,900. Ryan mentioned that when fundraising, it is good to know what the land is going to be used for, as people donating are going to want to know. Ray mentioned the group may ask for donations from the WCC if/when the deal goes through.

3. Great Brook Town Forest/Boggy Meadow: Marcus from Boggy Meadow Farms was in attendance. Most of Boggy Meadows is under easement with the MC. Boggy Meadow Farms has farmed 3-4 acres of the Great Brook property for about the last 30 years. Boggy Meadows uses “farming partners” which means they allow other farmers to use their land, including the 3-4 acres of the Great Brook property. They have partnered with Mike Barrett but are now switching to Roy Holman, who may bring cows back to the land. Marcus is looking for formal approval to use the 3-4 acres of land. John noted that the discussion last meeting was knowing whether or not the land is being leased. Marcus said there is a formal lease on his land and including the 3-4 acres. Peggy was discussing this with the selectboard and they thought it was land that the Sawyer’s gave to the town. Jackie thinks that land is a different property. Peggy is interested in whether or not the land is taxed. Peter asked about other land in the town. Specifically if town owned land gets leased to someone else, if they are to pay for it, and is this a precedent. Marcus noted that Boggy Meadow is not looking for a special deal and mentioned that if there is an appropriate fee for them to pay to continue to lease the land, they are very willing to do so. Peter noted that we don’t have information on other town owned lands and whether or not people are paying to lease them. The WCC is working to inventory town lands. Peter suggested that Boggy Meadow continue to operate as they have been until we know otherwise. Marcus reaffirmed that Boggy Meadow is willing to pay whatever is fair and appropriate.
4. Gowdy Property: Jackie followed up with Holly. The trees that had been left cut high were left this way due to state requirements. Jackie mentioned that the land looks much better now that things are growing in and looking green. She said it may have been cut more than necessary but not much more. Laura noted that she knows people who have expressed alarm due to the extent of the logging. It looks more logged than pruned. Jackie does not think that the logging went over what was allowed in the language of the easement. Lew asked if the logging is completed. Jackie said it is. Steven noted that in hindsight, it may have been helpful to walk the property ahead of time and flag it to ascertain the extent. Lew noted that when the cutting happened in Moody park in Claremont, the immediate reaction was shock but people are very happy with the result now that things have grown in. Peter pointed out that the main use of the land is for farming, and the cutting back was long overdue and had not happened in a long time.

### **Old Business:**

1. Reservoir Dam: John spoke with Mark Houghton. Mark would like to see some movement on this project. John emailed and called CDL Engineers in Concord and has not heard back. He also called the office in White River Junction and has not heard back either. John stressed the need to move ahead with this and hopes to have more information at the next meeting.
2. Walpole Easement Database: Laura contacted Anne McBride. They do not have a good system for tracking or reporting their easements. Anne sent Laura a link to a program some smaller groups are using, called “Landscape”. It’s about \$700 a year for what we would need. It looks like a good system. Laura also emailed the NH Association of Conservation Commissions about what they use or have heard of, and has not heard back. The commission verified that the goal of this is to record all the easements in the town. Peter suggests Laura come up with the master list and we fill in the gaps later. Laura has the list except anything new since the last Granite update

in about 2012. She only has the new ones from the MC. Lew suggests setting up a separate meeting to go over the easements only. WCC to explore a time that would work.

3. Fannie Mason Feasibility Study: Lew is dealing with a back injury but walked the west end and discovered some carriage trails. He needs to do the south side still. He has been using GPS on his phone but will go back with a Garmin later. He is hoping to finish in about a month.
4. Bill Callahan Land Survey: The land has been surveyed. Maps are complete. Alicia is out and will follow up at the next meeting.
5. Town Conservation Maps: Peter has done some merging of maps and progressed but they are not complete.
6. WCC Appointments: John and Myra are approved. The selectboard received a letter from Steven to fill Kelli's seat. Peter made a motion to approve Steven's request. Jackie seconded. All in favor. Kelli to send a letter to the selectboard asking to become an alternate.

**Other Business:**

1. Barry Conservation Camp: The student who was identified for the scholarship was selected, and when registering, it was determined the camps were booked solid. The email that was sent out reminding the WCC was sent to the wrong people. John reaffirmed our intent to sponsor a Walpole student. They are hoping that the student can get into another camp with a smaller waiting list.
2. Peggy received a letter from a man in Keene who rides rail trails, and thought that Walpole has the worst biking trails in the area, specifically on the rail trail. Lew would like to renew efforts to make the trail more complete and passable. Lew will respond to the gentleman.
3. Agreed to switch the next meeting to July 9th in lieu of July 2.
4. John will email Ray Boas to have him add the monthly WCC meeting to the calendar on the Walpole Clarion.

**Adjournment:** At 9:20 Peter made a motion to adjourn the meeting. John seconded. Meeting adjourned.

**Next Meeting:** Monday, July 9, 2018 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted; Steven Dumont, Recording Secretary

**Note:** These are unapproved minutes. Corrections, if any, will be found in the minutes of July 9, 2018.