

**Minutes for the Regular Meeting of the
Walpole Conservation Commission
May 3, 2021**

Members Present: Alicia Flammia, John Peska, Lewis Shelley, , Steven Dumont, Laura Hayes, Jackie Kensen, Cheryl Mayberry (Selectboard Liaison), Peggy Pschirrer (Selectboard Member), Jean Kobeski (Secretary)

Members Absent: France Menk

Alternates Present: None

Visitors Present: Kara Dexter

Call to Order: Alicia called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in Town Hall, first floor.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Steven asked for the correction of the spelling of Cheryl's name in the April 5 minutes. With that correction, Lew moved, Steven seconded, and all approved the minutes of the April 5 meeting.

Public Business

Treasury: Forestry Account - \$30,821.97
Conservation - \$154,276.03
Walker Road - \$3,364.07

Correspondence: Alicia received notification from the Monadnock Conservancy that the Wood and Lund Cold River easement applications have been approved.

Alicia received the NH DES *Supply Lines* with a feature article "Defending Against Drought."

Invoices were received from Long View Forest Management and Antioch.

Long View: \$168.75 for balance of Rapid Assessment and consulting
Lew moved, John seconded, and all approved payment from the Forestry budget.

Antioch: \$200 for map work (printing not included)
No vote needed because payment up to \$300 was approved at previous meeting.

Report from the Chair: Alicia thanked Jackie for doing the annual easement monitoring of Ballam Farm.

Alicia stated that that the WCC should do deed research and update NH GRANIT. Steven suggested doing this once a year. Cheryl said they should keep a running list of edits. Laura recommended talking about it in May and October to collect edits.

Alicia collected more comments from the box at the library with suggestions for better river access and picnic tables on the Walker Road trail.

Alicia stated that she feels the group should create an action plan to obtain more information about the Walker Road property before holding the community engagement event. Her suggestions included: NRI, bioblitz assessment, consultation with DES on putting in a road or better river access. Lew reminded the group that the current road is deeded for rural/ag usage.

New Business

Connecticut River Dam Relicensing: The Connecticut River Conservancy is accepting public comments from all river users until the end of June.

Alicia announced that Kathy Urffer, River Steward for the Connecticut River Conservancy, will make a presentation about the relicensing to the Commission at the June 7 meeting. Laura suggested viewing a 15-minute YouTube video on this topic in preparation for her visit.

ROW Biodiversity Study: John announced a 3-year multi-million dollar biodiversity study of the powerline ROW at Distant Hill Gardens. Michael Nerrie helped to set it up, and representatives from Liberty Utilities, Eversource, UNH, and Antioch will participate. They will look at the use of herbicides, invasive species, insects and animal habitats, and how right of ways are being managed.

Old Business

Invasive Species Walk: 10-12 people participated. Laura took pictures and will send them to Steven to put on Facebook. They reported that the trail was recently cleared and is in good shape.

The Walker Road bench has not been completed but will be soon.

Other Business

Trail Subcommittee: Lew shared options for the Mill Pond Trail map. One is an aerial view taken in the height of summer. The other was taken in spring when pond and walking path can be seen. The committee has yet to vote on which they want to use. Lew said the back of the map contains information on distance, elevation, and suggested usage. Lew was authorized to do additional trails; it was suggested that Great Brook Trail be added to the list. Lew said seven maps are planned in all, and the goal is to have them completed by the end of this month.

Alicia reported that Kelli is almost finished with the website and maps can be added.

Steven said that moving forward the committee will finish the maps then walk all the trails, prioritize maintenance, and organize work parties. New trails could be added in the future. Peggy asked how many miles of trails there are. Lew estimated 10-12 miles.

Monadnock Regional Rail Trail: The Monadnock Regional Rail Trail Committee (MRRTC) is applying to the state Recreational Trails Program for a \$100,000 Recreational Trails Grant. The grant will award \$80,000 with a \$20,000 match. The grant application is due in June. The committee is now doing the work log to help with bids. They want to have the application prepared by June 1; therefore they need to have the source of the \$20,000 match outlined. Could the WCC help?

Alicia stated the WCC could offer funds from the Mason Expendable, Forestry, or General Funds.

The goal of the MRRTC is to provide year-round maintenance of the trails. The Commission discussed who would share this responsibility for the Walpole section of the trail. If trail maintenance takes place in the summer, the Snowmobile Club could help, though they cannot offer equipment. Lew said the state will do some of the maintenance, but he asked Wendy and Will Grossman, Walpole's volunteers on the committee, to confirm this.

After a discussion about donating to this grant effort, Steven moved to approve up to \$20,000 to also include in-kind donations of materials, equipment, and labor for the purposes of grant submission

and pending approval. Jackie seconded the motion. Four members of the Commission voted in favor; two abstained, one of whom was Lew Shelley due to a possible conflict of interest.

Trail Clean-up: Steven said this would be discussed at the next Trail Committee meeting. Kara reported she has been cleaning up junk in the Mill Pond dump. Alicia told her if there is a lot of oil, she should notify the town to work with state responders to clear it.

Lew suggested talking about the pros and cons of leaf blowing trails at a future meeting.

Reservoir Dam: John reported there is no change in status; they are still waiting for the state report.

Walker Road: Laura stated that a community member from the Invasive Species Walk asked if log steps could be built into the steep section of the trail, and could an unloading zone for kayaks and canoes be created. Alicia said they could consult with the state about creating better access to the river. Steven said it may not be physically possible; a hydrology study should be done. The water level varies frequently. How should they notify the public of the water level? Lew suggested taking photos. Jackie suggested having stick gauges to actually show the water level during the seasons.

Laura asked who they could consult to learn more about how communities plan for such studies. Could they discuss it at the next meeting? Alicia said she would call DES.

Boundary Marking: Steven will pick a date for the next boundary marking expedition and will email it to everyone. Lew suggested doing Merriam and/or Trombley because there are no leaves there yet.

Wood Clearing: Alicia reported that Alex is working on Fanny Mason to continue the section that was already cut.

Adjournment: John moved, Steven seconded, and all voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

The next in-person meeting will be on Monday, June 7, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Kobeski, Recording Secretary

*** These minutes are in draft form until approved by the Commission on June 7, 2021.