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DATE January 17
2017



Huntington Conservation Commission

Minutes for December 8, 2016

Approved

PRESENT: Sheri Lynn (Co-Chair), Rebecca Ryan (Co-Chair), JB Bryan, Darlene Palola, Guthrie Smith, Roman Livak

ABSENT: Jenna Koloski, Maggie Mae Anderson

OTHERS PRESENT: None

CLERK: Natalie Beckwith

Call to Order: Ryan called the meeting to order at 19:04.

Public Comment: No public was present.

Minutes of November 10, 2016: Beckwith noted that the spelling of "Palola" and the note about the next steps for the Times Ink articles had been corrected from the draft minutes based on feedback conveyed via email.

MOTION: Livak moved to approve the minutes, Palola seconded. Passed unanimously.

Mail: A copy of the *2015-16 Vermont Land Trust Annual Report* was received and passed around to browse.

Work Plan:

Huntington Town Forest Survey

- The prize drawing was completed. Anyone who completed the survey had the option of entering their name and phone number for the chance to win one of the eight prizes.
- Anderson, who has been in charge of the survey prizes, was absent. The group briefly discussed how to distribute the prizes and supported the idea that winners should receive a call and then should be able to pick up their prize at the Town Offices.

ACTION: Lynn will touch base with Anderson about the next steps and how to distribute the prizes.

- Ryan thanked Lynn, Koloski, Beckwith, and her colleague at UVM who reviewed the survey for their work on this project. A 'thank you' card for Ryan's colleague was passed around for members to sign.
- Palola shared that she had a conversation with a member of the public about land parcels for sale. The group discussed briefly but determined that this was a conversation for another time.
- The group briefly shared their initial impressions of the Town Forest Survey results and decided to dedicate a large portion of the January HCC meeting to discussing the results in more detail and talking about next steps.
- Beckwith asked what the structure for reviewing the survey results should be and offered to perform some basic coding/categorization of the comments from the survey responses. The group agreed that an analysis of the additional comments collected from the survey was important to interpreting the results.

ACTION: Beckwith will bring printouts of the survey results summary and will categorize the comments from the survey for the January HCC meeting.

Budget

- The HCC reduced its operating budget by \$90 in order to meet the recommendations of the Selectboard.
- Ryan informed that the Amphibian rack cards are complete and so that purchase will come out of the budget shortly.
- The budget is drawn down or nearly drawn down on most lines. Once the rack cards are paid the HCC will review the updated budget from Barbara Elliott and will determine what funds remain for an invasives workshop.

Stormwater

- Palola updated the group that the grant application is in for the Lake Champlain Basin Program.
- The site visit with third grade students from Brewster Pierce took place and was a success. Paola and Barbara Aitkin's class went to see some of the erosion damage near the Rec Field and then went into the Town Office to see the project plans. Larry Montague took some photographs that might be published in the Times Ink. There is a possibility that the students may help lay hay and plant vegetation after the digging is done.
- Palola let us know that they are beginning to work on the tactical basin plan for the Winooski River Basin. This planning occurs every five years. Palola met with the concerned parties and reported that the big issues discussed in the meeting were: septic systems, buffering on agricultural land, and roads. Livak noted that he has not seen evidence of septic failure or issues, at least not from the samples he is aware of. The group discussed areas of town that testing might be useful. Palola will keep the group updated if there is another meeting that it would be good for more members of the HCC to attend.
- Palola also attended a Chittenden County Water Quality Advisory Committee meeting. They are looking at stormwater regulations and are also involved in approving the Winooski Basin plans.

Invasives

- The update on the invasives workshop is postponed until January when Anderson will be present.
- Smith showed the group one of the final invasives binders that she's been working on. There are currently two binders completed and Smith will complete a third. The group reminded Smith to print at the Town Office and not use her personal printing resources.
- The invasives binders will be kept at the Town Office, Huntington Public Library, and Brewster Pierce School. Lynn suggested that the binders be highlighted in a Times Ink article.

ACTION: Koloski was going to create a caption for the Dames Rocket photo on the cover of the binders. Smith will follow up with Koloski to have her update the cover with the caption.

ACTION: Ryan will get Smith another Wild Parsnip handout for the invasives binders.

- Ryan brought up the Emerald Ash Borer item. There has been past discussion about this item and discussion of approaching Bill Mennings about forming a subcommittee to work on this issue. Livak noted that if the town made a commitment to clearing the right of ways by maintaining it to only shrubbery and no large ash trees than this project would be moot. The group will reassess this item in the context of the Work Plan.

Outreach

Website

- Ryan asked Barbara Elliot to make some minor updates to the website, taking out some of the dated items and adding the new HCC members. There is room for more work and updates to the website. Ryan has not gone through the layers of documents yet but will prioritize the HCC landing page.

- Barbara does the HCC updates and Heidi does them for some of the other groups. The website administrator is willing to allow someone with experience to be trained to make updates, but since the HCC Clerk is not hourly it doesn't make sense to move on that yet.
- Lynn noted that she doesn't like that all of the minutes and agendas are stored on the webpage because there is a lot of content and it is difficult to navigate to the most recent and relevant items.

ACTION: Ryan will ask for the "What's New" section on HCC landing page to be cleared of old items and replaced with information on the Town Forest Survey. She will also make sure that all out of date information is removed from the HCC landing page.

ACTION: Livak will check the website to make sure that all the Conservation Fund documents are up to date and organized appropriately, starting with the application. He will flag if there are other items that need to be updated.

Times Ink Articles

- The HCC will submit quarterly articles to the Times in 2017. The articles are targeted for February, April, June, and September 2017.
 - February (Lynn)- The topic will be the Town Forest Survey. The article will share the results and/or share the outcome of any conversation with the Selectboard. Lynn would like to be sure to add a note in the article saying something like, "Did you know that you can access the town forest through these routes in the winter season?" Ryan added that it would be great to have a map like the one available in the Town Forest Report.
 - April (Ryan)- The topic will be amphibians.
 - June (Smith, Bryan, Anderson)- The topic will be invasives.
 - September (Bryan)- The topic will be mushrooms.
- Palolo noted that the HCC should coordinate with articles that other groups, such as the HHCT, might be putting out when we are preparing to publish an article so overlap is avoided.

ACTION: Smith will reach out to Heidi with the HCC article plan and the target issues (Feb, April, June, Sept). She will ask what the guidelines are for word count, page space, images, etc..

ACTION: Lynn will write the article for February and share it with the group once it's ready. The group will provide feedback and then Lynn submit the article for the February Times Ink issue.

ACTION: Ryan will send Lynn the deadlines for submitting to the Times Ink.

Other Business:

- Lynn would like to discuss the location of meeting during winter. The library is open during the day so it shouldn't be too cold and the HCC permitted to turn up the heat if needed. Lynn shared that she is concerned about the key access, it can be challenging, and that most of the members are closer to the center of town. Ryan noted that for the time being, the library is reserved on an ongoing basis. It was decided to move this item to the January meeting agenda.
- Lynn noted that the HHCT is very active and it would be good to collaborate with them in the future.
- Livak recommended that the HCC go to the Selectboard with the Town Forest Survey results and recommendations for options/next steps. Lynn, Ryan, and Smith understood that the survey was purely to provide the Selectboard with more information and that the HCC was expected to present the Selectboard with the survey results, but not options for next steps at this time.
- The HHCT approached Ryan and Lynn about a "Citizen Science" program. The group agreed not to pursue this particular collaboration because it does not align with the HCC Work Plan.

- Livak reminded the co-chairs about providing content for the Huntington Town Report.

ACTION: Ryan will work on the HCC paragraph for the Huntington Town Report.

Topics for Next Meetings Agenda, January 12, 2017:

- Town Forest Survey results and next steps
- Status of budget and available funds for an invasives workshop
- Updates on invasives workshop (Anderson)
- Meeting location, library or town offices

Adjournment: Livak moved and Lynn seconded to adjourn the meeting at 20:29. Passed unanimously.

December 8, 2016: HCC monthly meeting at the Huntington Public Library

December 13, 2016: Draft/unapproved minutes sent to Town Clerk for website posting

January 12, 2017: Final/approved minutes approved

January 17, 2017: Approved minutes sent to Town Clerk for recording & website posting