

Huntington Conservation Commission

Minutes for January 12, 2017

DRAFT

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

ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: None

CLERK: Rebecca Ryan (filling in for Natalie Beckwith)

Call to Order: -- called the meeting to order at 19:03

Public Comment: No public was present.

Minutes of December 8, 2016:

MOTION: -- moved to approve the minutes as amended-- seconded. Passed unanimously.

Mail: Lynn received a note of appreciation from HHCT for HCC and HHCT's collaboration this year.

Work Plan:

Town Forest Survey

- Results and next steps: Ryan said she and Sheri received an email from the town forest, Jake Tapper, offering his support. Ryan invited him to this meeting, but he is out of the office this week. Members' homework assignment since the last meeting was to review the survey and Beckwith would analyze survey comments and look at themes. However, Beckwith was not able complete this task and unable to attend tonight's meeting due to a family commitment. Lynn had an opportunity to review results again and HCC discussed. In general, there were varying opinions about whether the response rate was high enough to fairly represent the community. Lynn noted that 24% of respondents (N=153) have ever used the town forest. 33% (50) would like to keep the town forest as is, and improve access. The second highest was to sell the town forest and purchase another property. 67% would like to see the town forest for wildlife habitat and 57% for conservation. Some respondents expressed concern about the impacts of about mountain biking and horseback riding. Members spoke briefly about other communities' efforts to expand mountain biking trails. Education activities and river access in a town forest were very important to respondents (42 and 43%). Interesting to note, 77% of respondents thought all town residents should participate in discussions about decisions related to the town forest. 81% said the conservation commission should be part of the discussion. One of the themes in comments was concern about the lack of access to the town forest. Several would like to see the town pursue right-a-way to access. HCC briefly discussed the challenges the town faces to gaining access when the property is surrounded by private land. HCC decided to postpone a vote on recommendations for the Selectboard until the February meeting after Natalie completes further analysis.
- Koloski and Anderson cannot attend the February 9 meeting so the group decided to meet on February 23 if Beckwith and Tapper (the county forester) can attend. If they can't attend, we'll try February 16. At

the February meeting, we will try to vote on recommendations. Roman reminded us that we need to do an organizational meeting as some members' terms expire.

ACTION: Lynn will contact Beckwith and Anne Dannenburg (for library availability) about date change. Ryan will contact the forester.

Budget

- Status of Budget and available funds for an invasives workshop: Ryan said HCC does not have any money remaining this fiscal year for programs/workshops, but the line items can be shifted. Overall, HCC has about \$600 (dues/training, operating supplies and purchased services) remaining in its budget. Anderson attended the workshop led by Mike Bald in Stowe. The cost for the workshop (full-day) for \$325.00. They spent the day ripping out barberry. Bald can customize the program, but Anderson wasn't sure he would run one to educate homeowners about invasives and how to manage. HCC's goal for a workshop would be to educate and give people to tools to manage invasives. Anderson asked if we would also want to identify and map invasives in Huntington. The group discussed whether we should focus on education or mapping. Koloski offered to research what other towns are doing to address invasives. Livak thought the Arrowwood Environmental may have an inventory of at least knotweed along the Huntington River. It would be several years old, but could possibly be updated. Bryan suggested we may consider the conservation fund to mitigate invasives.

ACTION:

- Anderson will contact Elizabeth Spinney with the state for a possible hands-on workshop.
- Koloski will research what other towns are doing to address invasives.
- For future consideration, HCC may contact Arrowwood Environmental about the inventory of knotweed along the Huntington River and Friends of the Winooski (RWR) for future efforts/partnerships for a town-wide strategy/plan.

Stormwater

- Palola said the grant award will be announced in late-January – early February. If it is not awarded, FWR will pursue a state grant. High Meadow Fund has a grant opportunity but it's a multi-community effort, and would be a challenge to coordinate and apply.

Other Business:

Meeting Location

- Members discussed the pros and cons of meeting at the town office versus the library, especially regarding each of us driving to meetings. Livak, Lynn and Palola could car pool to the library. Lynn said she would ride her bike in the summer. Bryan and Smith usually car pool.

VOTE: Livak motioned that we keep the meeting at the library and Bryan seconded. All were in favor.

Member Recruitment

- Lynn said this is the biggest membership we have had, but we need to plan for the future. Carmen Tedesco is interested in serving, but she is not sure she has the time to commit. Lynn will follow up with her. We need to think about whether members want to leave at the end of the term or remain. Livak (his term expires in March) would like to step down as long as someone can replace him. Smith will

reach out to Paul Schwartzkopf and Ryan will follow up with Jennifer Esser who both expressed interest in serving. Livak noted that the website shows Ryan's term ended in 2016. She thought it was extended last March but will follow up with Barbara Elliot.

ACTION:

- Lynn to contact C. Tedesco
- Smith to contact P. Schwartzkopf
- Ryan to contact Esser
- Ryan to confirm her commission term

Other Business:

Sugar Makers' Open House Timeline

- Ryan emailed Margaret Taft to ask if the open should be set the same weekend as the state open house weekend (March 24-25) or the first weekend in April, but she has not responded. Members discussed the process, including the challenge of finding out who is producing syrup. If we do coordinate, we could recruit through the Front Porch Forum and create an online registration for Sugarmakers (rather than Bryan making phone calls as he has done in the past).

ACTION:

- Lynn will look for a list of sugarmakers.
- Ryan will work on FPF posting and registration link. Koloski offered to help.

Website Elliott updated the main page for HCC per Ryan's request. Livak has not had a chance to look at the layers/links for needed updates but he will.

Times Ink Articles

ACTION: Lynn will write an article about the town forest survey and Guthrie will proof. Lynn will submit it in time for the February issue.

Invasives Binder Ryan gave Smith the wild parsnip flyers to add to each binder. Smith said the binders are ready to share, once the coversheet is updated.

ACTION: Koloski will finalize the cover sheets.

Access through Town Forest for Logging (update)

- Ryan emailed the forester, Andy Hutchinson, for Pizzagalli's property and asked for an update on the logging project. He said the logger is currently working in Middlebury and will likely start in Huntington at the end of January, depending upon the weather.

Citizen Scientist

- Ryan said Anne Dannenberg with HHCT asked again if HCC members knew or would be interested in serving as a citizen scientist. Palola noted that there are many birdwatchers in Huntington. Livak and Bryan would consider but would like more info.

ACTION: Ryan will follow up with HHCT.

History of the Winooski Presentation (update)

- Ryan said HHCT is considering co-sponsorship of this \$200 workshop (as discussed by HCC in previous meetings), but asked Diane Reynolds (the person who first recommended the presenter to Ryan) for more information. She did not respond before HHCT's meeting so the discussion is postponed to next month's meeting. HCC agreed that a similar presentation about the Huntington River would align with our work plan.

Herp brochure

- Ryan passed out the new rack cards and thanked John Hadden for donating his time to design it. She passed a card for signature to send to Hadden on behalf of HCC.

Annual Report

- Ryan submitted HCC's report along with a photo of the Brewster-Pierce students learning about stormwater run-off this week. Lynn thanked Palola and Ryan for writing it.

Topics for Next Meetings Agenda, February 9, 2017 (rescheduled to February 16 or 23):

- Survey review and town forest recommendation (VOTE).
- Roman: website updates
- Invasives updates
- Sugarmakers updates
- Member update

Adjournment: -- moved and -- seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:55. Passed unanimously.

February 16 or 23, 2017: HCC monthly meeting at the Huntington Public Library

January 16, 2017: Draft/unapproved minutes sent to Town Clerk for website posting

TBD 2017: Final/approved minutes approved

TBD 2017: Approved minutes sent to Town Clerk for recording & website posting