

**Town of Huntington — Huntington Conservation Commission (HCC)
Town Forest (TF) Public Forum**

Thursday, 21 April 2016—1900-2030

Huntington Library

** UNAPPROVED ** MINUTES

Agenda	<p>The Huntington Conservation Commission will held a meeting described as: “The HCC has worked hard towards recommendations from the Town Forest report. There has been some progress with access but also some challenges. Recently, a prospective buyer approached HCC about buying the forest and keeping its conservation intact. Now the HCC wants to hear from you! Join us to learn more and add your voice to the discussion.”</p> <p>Agenda 7:00 - Welcome and Introductions 7:10 - Information and Background 7:40 - Clarifying Questions and Answers 7:55 - Community Discussion 8:25 - Conclusions and Next Steps 8:30 - Adjourn</p>
Members present:	Sheri Lynn (Co-Chair), Rebecca Ryan (Co-Chair), Darlene Paola, JB Bryan, Roman Livak and Jenna Whitson. Also, Heather Pembroke, former HCC member.
Staff/Officials present	HCC Clerk, Terry Ryan Town Administrator, Barbara Elliot
Others present	<p>Per sign in sheet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terry Boyle Paul Schwartzkopf Alissa White Robin Worn Karyl Kent Charlie Young Wally Jenkins Jennifer Esser Gere Berger Sabine Reising Carmen Tedesco Anne Dannenberg Brian Hayes Margaret Fowle Debbie Worthley Guthrie Smith
Call to order	R Ryan called the meeting to order at 19:10.
Agenda	Discussion

**Town of Huntington — Huntington Conservation Commission (HCC)
Town Forest Forum
Thursday, 21 April 2016—8:30 pm**

<p>Topic: Welcome and Introductions</p>	<p>Rebecca Ryan introduced the HCC members and Heather Pembrook, a former member on the HCC when the Town Forest Report (2009) was produced. She then discussed what the HCC does and its priorities: Town forest , Storm water management, Promotion of conservation opportunities like invasive mitigation , river monitoring, and invasives, and education including ‘special places’ events such as the recent mushroom walk.</p>
<p>Topic: Information and Background</p>	<p>Heather Pembrook outlined the <i>State of the Town Forest Report :2009</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She noted the conservation, recreation, education and logging aspects, but pointed out that any and all uses are hampered by the inaccessibility and ‘land-locked’ nature of the TF. <p>Sheri Lynn discussed efforts and processes to date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She outlined the meetings the HCC has held with the Trust for Public Land, the Catamount and Camels Hump ski organizations, and adjacent landowners, and the opportunity presently by one adjacent land owner (Remo Pizzagalli) who is interested in buying the TF. She noted that the assessed value of the property is only \$68, 000 and obtaining a conservation easement (which Pizzagalli is amenable to) might incur legal costs of \$20,000. Pizzagalli has not made a formal offer yet. This meetings intent is to gather Town feelings towards retention or sale of the TF, and other options and ideas the Town residents might have.
<p>Topic: Clarifying Questions and Answers</p>	<p>Jenna Whitson led a Q&A of clarifications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robin Worn asked about access, and there was some discussion, pointing out the nearest road access is about 1.5 miles away, and all access ifs across private land adjacent. The ski organizations have winter-only permissions to cross these. The lands are not posted. However, some landowners have expressed concern to the HCC about any action which might increase traffic to and from the TF • Jennifer Esser asked what groundwork has been done regarding a conservation easement to preserve the land, were it to be sold; the HCC has not yet pursued this in detail other than as noted in Sheri Lynn’s remarks above. • There was some general discussion regarding what-if, were the TF sold to Pizzagalli, who it is believed would conserve it, at some future time resold it. • Terry Boyle asked about zoning regulations in the TF area (25 acre minimum lot size, very limited development allowable in the “Woodland” and “Conservation’ Districts per the Town Land Use Regulations). • Margaret Fowle asked about the financial viability of a sale, and the cost of an easements, and what would be done with the proceeds were it to be sold (intent would be to add the funds to the Conservation Reserve Fund, presently at about \$188,000) • Jennifer Esser asked if perhaps the State might want to take the land over (apparently not).
<p>Topic: Community Discussion</p>	<p>Jenna Whitson led a discussion addressing these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think the Huntington Town Forest should be sold? • What do you think should be done with the current Huntington Town Forest? • What is your vision for the future of the Huntington Town Forest? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heather Pembrook noted how great the Hinesburg TF is, and how cool it would be to have something like that in Huntington. ○ Jennifer Esser asked if another parcel is in sight, but that we should keep the TF anyway for its value for habitat etc. ○ Terry Boyle asked about how much the sale might be worth and the funds not in the Conservation Fund, pointed out the proceeds might not be very substantial. ○ Carmen Tedesco reinforced Esser's position that we should keep the TF. ○ Gere Berger questions the idea of selling it, as it was a gift to the Town, and to sell it would not be good stewardship ○ Terry Ryan supported the sale and expressed confidence that Pizzagalli would

Town of Huntington — Huntington Conservation Commission (HCC)

Town Forest Forum

Thursday, 21 April 2016—8:30 pm

	<p>continue to allow public use as presently, and conserve it, so there would be a net benefit to the Town if sold.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ JB Bryan noted that nothing in the Town deed to the TF mandates conservation. ○ Carmen Tedesco said that we should keep it and manage the resource per a Management Plan (there is one in the Report). ○ Barbara Elliot pointed out that we have good access to the Hinesburg TF, but that sale of our TF might facilitate obtaining land with river access, which most Huntingtonians lack, but such a property would probably require fast action and funds on hand. ○ Wally Jenkins stated that he really likes our TF and wants to keep it. ○ Robin Worn noted that the Huntington Historical and Community Trust could help with a new park or the like, as a non-profit, but the sale of the TF ought not be pursued as it's just not enough \$\$ to be worth the effort. ○ Brian Hayes would like to keep the TF and pursue a more accessible area as well. Barbara Elliot suggested putting a flyer in the upcoming tax mailing, asking if there is any land available. ○ Alissa White wants to keep the TF. ○ Jennifer Esser noted that public land acquisition is normally a time-consuming process and requires a willing seller to put up with the process.
Topic: Conclusions and Next Steps	<p>Rebecca Ryan addressed the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● She observed that the general consensus is to keep the TF for its conservation value, and look into possibly acquiring some more accessible area to Town recreation and etc. There is no reason to rush to sell, so why do it. ● She thanked the participants for coming. ● She then solicited the audience for volunteers to help with the process of further plans for the TF and/or new public land, and for persons to serve on the HCC.
Adjourn	Meeting closed at 20:30. The HCC continued with a separate meeting; see separate minutes.
	<p>12 May 2016 – HCC monthly meeting at the Huntington Public Library TBD 2016– Draft/unapproved minutes sent to Town Clerk for website posting TBD 2016 – Final/approved minutes approved TBD 2016 – Approved minutes sent to Town Clerk for recording & website posting</p>