

Huntington Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

July 9, 2009

Approved September 10, 2009

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DATE September 14, 2009

Meeting began 7:05pm, meeting adjourned 9:04pm

**In attendance:** Amy Dohner, Alan Brace, Steve Hagenbuch, Laura Hill Bermingham, Wally Jenkins Margaret Fowle, Roman Livak

**Absent:** Tyler Miller

**I. Minutes and mail**

- Changes made to June minutes
- June minutes unanimously approved
- Mail disseminated

**II. Public comment**

No public comment

**III. HCC term start and expiration dates for committee members**

- Steve found the following HCC member term start and expiration dates:
  - Wally: 2007-2011
  - Steve: 2007-2011
  - Alan: 2012
  - Tyler: 2008-2012
  - Amy: 2006-2010
  - Margaret: 2008-2012
  - Roman: 2009-2013
- Terms will start in March, February will be the last meeting
- New HCC member nominations should be made to the selectboard by December/January

**IV. Briefings & Updates**

**1. Update on Energy Tour – Amy**

- July 25, 2009 – renewable energy home tour
- Amy's been seeking homes for the tour
- Attendants may break into groups (depending on attendance) and each group visit ~4 homes
- Dean Menke is in charge of advertising and is currently out of town so there is no update on advertising for the event
- Amy will not be in town on July 25, Laura and Roman volunteered time to help out with the tour

**2. Large Habitat Assessment project - Steve**

- Steve spoke with Jesse Mohr, consultant of Large Habitat Assessment project, about how Huntington will table the project until 2010
- Steve will email Jesse and Jens Hilke about attending an HCC meeting this September or October
- April/May/June 2010 tentative project start date

- Roman mentioned that we should get the ball rolling sooner than later on obtaining funds (from Conservation Fund, HCC budget, etc.)

### ***3. Status of printing of State of Forest report – Amy***

- Amy has printed the State of the Forest report, but does not have them here at the meeting
- Blue Prints currently has the copies (50 for \$450)
- Amy will either bring them to the next meeting, or before then, may distribute them to the library, town office, etc.
- Amy sent Dan Stoddard the invoice in time to include in 2008-2009 fiscal budget
- Tyler also sent invoice for VYCC Town Forest trails project to include in 2008-2009 fiscal budget
  
- Steve recommends getting the State of the Forest Report to the Selectboard for approval
- Steve will attend the August Selectboard meeting to get it on the agenda
- Amy will get Steve a bound, color copy to Steve prior to the Selectboard meeting
  
- Wally asked, if after Selectboard approval, is the Town Forest recognized as an official town forest by the state?
- Mike Snyder would be the one to talk to about this, and Steve will try to touch base with Mike prior to the Selectboard meeting
- Mike Snyder recommended going through with the Town Forest designation, but no HCC members were aware of the exact process.
- Roman suggested that Mike attend the Selectboard meeting to answer any questions that come up from the Selectboard about the Town Forest report
- Steve will talk to Mike about attending the meeting
- Margaret mentioned whether the lack of access to the Town Forest would hinder an official designation
- Steve thinks that it wouldn't, but Selectboard may be less likely to approve it without access

### ***4. Update on Town Forest trail work with VYCC***

- In Tyler's absence, Amy reported that Tyler signed an MOU with VYCC
- VYCC will start the work "soon"
- It is expected that HCC members will be able to walk through the Town Forest with VYCC to explore ideas about where to put trails

### ***5. October discussion of HHCT proposal***

- The HHCT proposal to the Conservation Fund will be tabled until the October 2009 meeting
- HHCT is not changing the proposal, but there are some things that are not clear between HHCT (buyer) and the seller

## **V. Retreat Items**

- Roman asked what inventories we had
  - wetland, river data

- amphibian inventories
- other?
- Roman asked if there are soil maps in order to find acreage of tillable land in Huntington?
- Steve mentioned USDA agricultural survey has this information, and Alan also mentioned to look at NRCS
- Alan suggested a special meeting to go through the information in “the box” (Aaron’s file cabinet that he passed off to Tyler)
- Steve will contact Aaron about sorting through the irrelevant information
- Roman can make a master inventory of information in the box
- Amy suggested a file with an organized index
- Can the town give the HCC a drawer? Should the HCC buy a cabinet to keep all HCC files?
- Alan will talk with Ed to see if we can get a filing cabinet and if there are tubes, etc. for the maps
- Wally can talk to Ann at the library to see if we can get copies of HCC documents to the library, but Amy mentioned that we have a hard enough time managing 1 box!

**Retreat notes:**

- At the end of the retreat, the importance of making the HCC more public was stressed
  - E.g., website, brochure, Special Place tours, posting agendas
- Alan can write a column for the Times Ink to remind folks that the HCC exists, what we do, etc.
  - Amy suggested that a fun activity, like Special Places, can bring people out and recommended that the column can be about Special Place, and then plug the HCC
- Roman asked, What are Special Places?
  - Steve summarized that special places are publicly accessible, unique places, meant to engage the community to see places they may have never been
  - Amy mentioned a previous campaign to ask Huntington residents for “special places” ideas
- Alan mentioned that Special Places be a good thing to include in the Times Ink article
- After the Special Places Times Ink article, we should write an article about the Conservation Fund – it is clear that it is important to get the information out about the Fund to residents (how much, what it’s for, etc.)
- Website: Laura has web design experience and will talk with Heidi about the HCC website and how it can be created and maintained/ updated
- Should the HCC have a “PR team”?
- Wally asked whether HCC members can recommend plots for conservation; before we’ve always assumed that residents would come to the HCC, but should we be more proactive? As a commission, could we talk to the landowner?
- No one objected to this idea

- Steve mentioned that it would be totally fine to talk to individual people with select properties and mention the Conservation Fund
- Organizing the HCC inventories would be especially good for this reason, to be able to pinpoint important wildlife areas for conservation
- Potential Times Ink article topics:
  1. Special Places
  2. Town Forest report
  3. Conservation Fund
  4. If HHCT proposal is funded, write an article about the project
- Alan mentioned the note in Wally's handout that the last survey of HCC activities was done in 1992. Wally mentioned that this information could be gleaned from HCC annual reports, and Alan can look into it and include in the Times Ink article.
- We need to pay attention to Times Ink due dates, especially for the Special Places tour
- In August, we will have a further discussion of the retreat notes, PR, 101 programs, etc.
- Members should think about forming a Town Forest subcommittee
  - Steve and Margaret would be interested in being on this subcommittee, and Tyler seems to have a vested interest but is absent from the meeting
  - Discussion of the Town Forest subcommittee tabled until August meeting
- Scenic Inventory discussion: It was expressed that there may be sensitivities surrounding scenic inventories and conflicts with energy matters, and the issue was tabled until August 2009

#### **VI. September Special Places Tour**

- Ideas for October 2009?
  - Burnt Rock Pond
  - Members should email Steve with other ideas
- We will need to reach a decision on Oct 2009 Special Place Tour by August 2009 meeting
- Huntington River walk
  - Old mill sites along river (history) and/or ecology tour
  - Steve can coordinate, but cannot pull everything together in 3 weeks, so this tour is tabled until summer 2010

#### **VII. Other Business**

- 8:30-12:30 this Saturday, July 11: VT Family Forest harvesting firewood in Town Forest at Lincoln library
- Friday morning, July 10 6:30-8:30ish: Bird monitoring in Town Forest with Steve
- Alan has information from Selectboard regarding road salt in Minnesota lakes and rivers which was disseminated to HCC members

#### **Items for August's agenda:**

- Further discussion of the retreat notes (PR, 101 programs, etc.)
- Form a Town Forest subcommittee (trail planning, bird monitoring, timber harvesting)
- Scenic Inventory discussion
- Special Places August 2009 meeting
- Website update - Laura