

Huntington Conservation Commission (HCC) Meeting

May 14, 2009

Approved June 11, 2009

Meeting began 7:06pm, meeting adjourned 9:09pm

In attendance: Wally Jenkins, Alan Brace, Steve Hagenbuch, Laura Hill Bermingham, Tyler Miller, Margaret Fowle, Roman Livak

Absent: Amy Dohner

I. Welcome to new member

- Welcome Roman Livak to the Huntington Conservation Commission!

II. Minutes

- April minutes unanimously approved with changes

III. HCC Chairperson

- Chairperson nomination tabled for an additional month when all HCC members are present
- Steve will serve as interim chair for another month
- Cross-pollination with other conservation commissions may serve as a way to bring more information to the table
- Roman had the idea of having Laura, HCC clerk, serve as the point-person for information dissemination, and Laura was fine with this idea
- Revolving agenda-maker, facilitator

IV. Size of the commission

- Steve agrees with increasing the number of commissioners, but to increase to 9 to have an odd number of voting members
- Quorum with 9 commissioners = 5 voting members present
- Put an ad in the Times Ink! advertising open HCC positions – Wally will post ad
- Officially check with the selectboard with the question of increasing number of commissioners – Alan will go to Monday's selectboard meeting
- Alan will also check with selectboard about whether Laura can be a voting member and a paid clerk

V. Organizational document review and voting protocol

- Alan proposed posting HCC meeting agendas at stores
- Agenda needs to be disseminated 2 weeks after the last meeting (i.e., 2 weeks before next month's meeting) and commissioners have 1 week to make changes
- HCC agenda posted in stores 1 week prior to the meeting
- List public comment for 10 minutes as an agenda item at the beginning of the agenda (after meeting minutes approval)
- Meeting minutes will be disbursed to commissioners within 5 days of meeting
- Steve raised the question whether the HCC is a representative for conservation decisions in the town, *or* Is the commission serving the best interest for conservation in the town?
- HCC is not a regulatory body for the town, we are an advisory board that makes recommendations, promotes conservation, etc. but the HCC is not a regulatory body

- Majority vote, but HCC members can recuse themselves from particular issues (i.e., signing the letter to state representatives)
- What is and what isn't a voting issue? e.g., Ancient Roads committee asking for the HCC's input for maintaining ancient roads (asking for recommendations, not regulations)
- Not formalizing a vote on every issue, but commissioners should be empowered to call a vote if they feel as is their voice is not being heard on a particular issue
- The commissioners names will be listed Yay or Nay in the meeting minutes on issues that are voted on
- Consensus cannot be reached and no action can be taken through email discussion because it is not following the rules of an open meeting

VI. Huntington Town Forest Reports

- The commissioners had additional comments on Heather Pembroke's State of the Forest Report
- Margaret will send Laura the final report, and Laura will make final revisions to the State of the Forest report and pass along to commissioners
- Final vote on the State of the Forest report will occur during the June meeting
- Steve spoke with Mike Snyder, Chittenden County Forester, about the 10-year Forest Management Plan for Huntington Town Forest
- Once we have received the final version from Mike Snyder, the following month it will be put on the HCC agenda to be discussed, and then presented to Selectboard
- Roman recommended presenting all recommendations for each forest stand
- There has been previous public comment on recommendations in an open meeting with a presentation given by Mike Snyder
- The HCC came to a consensus, with the input of Mike Snyder and the public, on one recommendation for each stand
- Forest management plans generally only have 1 recommendation
- There was a discussion of whether to include all recommendations in the 10-year Forest Management Plan for Huntington Town Forest when it is presented to the Selectboard
- What does the Selectboard's want the HCC to do with the Forest Management Plan?
- Does the HCC have the charter to make recommendations?
- Roman will look into the original letter from the Selectboard to the HCC (Rob Zimmerman)
- Is the HCC given the responsibility of managing the town forest with the recommendation of county forester, Mike Snyder?
- Get in HCC purview, then we can administer it

VII. Town Forest Access

- Steve and Roman went on a walk with Ancient Roads Committee in early April 2009 where everyone met with the landowners whose land abuts the potential access to the town forest (there were 2 landowners present)
- There was favorable response from landowners to have road be an access point to Town Forest
- The details have not been fleshed out (who has access, when is there access, mode of access, etc.)

- A formal survey will be done of the ancient road (and may, anecdotally, already have been done)
- The process of moving forward of being able to legally access the forest in some way has been initiated
- Audubon will continue annual breeding bird survey twice in June throughout town forest

VIII. Conservation Fund application

- HHCT submitted a proposal for ~\$34,000 conservation fund money for the Hanson field
- Tyler will follow up with Aaron on whether there is a cap of funding, and Tyler will get other documents from Aaron
- Roman was interested in discussing with the HHCT the transfer of the Hanson Field to a land trust, riparian buffer zone, and had many other questions
- The process is as follows:
- The HCC will hear proposal from HHCT
- HCC provides recommendation to Selectboard on whether the proposal is funded or not
- Selectboard has final vote
- Steve will contact Amy Seidl with HHCT about sending a representative from HHCT, along with the Keirs, to June 2009 meeting

IX. Agenda items for June 2009

- selection of HCC chairperson
- vote to approve State of the Forest report
- HHCT budget proposal
- vote on 2009-2010 budget spending
 - recreational trails in Town Forest (~\$500)
- April retreat discussion (Laura will email to everyone)

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DATE

[Handwritten signature]
 DATE June 15, 2009