

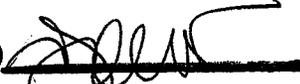
Huntington Conservation Commission (HCC) Meeting

April 9, 2009

Minutes approved May 14, 2009

RECEIVED

DATE


May 21, 2009

Meeting began 7:08pm, meeting adjourned 9:00pm

In attendance: Wally Jenkins, Alan Brace, Steve Hagenbuch, Laura Hill Bermingham, Amy Dohner, Tyler Miller

Absent: Margaret Fowle

Huntington resident in attendance: Roman Livak

I. Discussion of the HCC appointment

- Alan discussed his frustration with the lack of discussion regarding the HCC endorsement letter to the Selectboard at the March 2009 meeting
- The process should have been brought to a vote at the table before the endorsement letter was sent to the Selectboard
- It was agreed that each important HCC issue should be brought to the table for discussion, not simply over email

II. Approve March meeting minutes

- Motion made by Steve to approve meeting minutes
- An addition was made to March minutes (Alan Brace's comment in the State of the Forest report regarding obtaining access)
- March minutes approved unanimously

III. Discuss changes in HCC

1. New member selection by Selectboard

- Roman Livak and Laura Hill Bermingham are both potential appointees for the HCC
- The Selectboard had a split vote (2-2) on new appointee during their April 6th meeting and vote was tabled
- HCC new member appointment will be voted on at the April 20th Selectboard meeting
- Alan proposes changing the number of HCC appointments
- Amy thinks that the HCC organization documents states that there be only 7 members
- This number may be changed, but the procedure will need to be researched

2. Collection of HCC information from Aaron

- Tyler will get the documents from Aaron (both paper and electronic)
- Further discussion was tabled until the May 2009 meeting

3. Organizational procedures

- Conservation Commission statutes and "Defining Open Meetings" were copied and disbursed thanks to Alan Brace
- Discussion of procedures was tabled until the May 2009 meeting

4. Chairperson transition

- The decision of choosing a new chairperson is an in-house decision, and does not have to go through the Selectboard

Huntington Conservation Commission (HCC) Meeting

April 9, 2009

Minutes approved May 14, 2009

- Potentially, the HCC can create subcommittees to take on specific tasks, so these duties will not fall exclusively on the new Chair

- Members discussed pros and cons of a rotating monthly meeting facilitator and weekly agenda
- It was agreed that we will rotate among HCC members for agenda creation and meeting facilitation
- Number of years that each appointee has been on the HCC: Wally = 5, Amy = 3, Steve = 3, Tyler = 1.5, Alan = 1, Margaret = 1
- Tyler would like the Chairperson to not just be a figurehead, but also be the organizational glue for the HCC (eg., mail, correspondence with other organizations, etc.)
- Amy mentioned that it's important to have everyone here before we decide on a chair
- Amy had previously expressed interest in the chair over email, but mentioned that she may not be the best candidate
- Steve was nominated by Alan, but Steve cannot fully commit to the position, but can serve as the interim chair for 1 month
- Steve as interim chairperson position was voted on unanimously by the commission
- Tyler will create the agenda and facilitate the meeting for May 2009
- Alan will create the agenda and facilitate the meeting for June 2009

IV. Review and revise HCC budget requested by SB

- The budget reduction deadline is Monday, 4/13/09
- Explanation of line items as follows:
 - Purchase services: bringing in speaker, legal services
 - Salaries – for HCC clerk
 - Dues and Training – due to organizations, training for HCC appointees
 - Workshops and Programs – speaker fees, refreshments for HCC-hosted programs
 - Operating supplies – paper, postage
- The HCC exceeded the budget in 2008 by \$1153
- HCC's understanding is that the 5% be removed from the HCC operating budget, but not from the conservation fund reserve budget (if this is not the case, the HCC will take 5% out of the \$16,000 conservation reserve fund)
- Based on our HCC budget must be reduced by \$135 to reach the 5% mark
- Amy made a motion to take \$135 out of Dues/Training line item, remaining \$115
- Unanimously voted on by commission
- Steve will present revised budget with reduction to Ed Wildman by Monday, April 12

V. Update on Town Forest Management Plan

1. Final State of the Forest report by Heather Pembroke

- Not all commissioners received Heather's final draft via email
- The State of the Forest report still has draft maps
- Aaron needs to provide Heather with final town forest maps
- Amy will email Margaret and Aaron regarding outstanding issues regarding the State of the Forest report
- Appointees will correspond over email if there are outstanding issues
- At the May 2009 meeting, we will quickly vote on the State of the Forest report
- Amy will remind Heather to send invoice for her services

2. Town Forest Management Plan by Mike Snyder

- Having a Management Plan does not afford any additional measures for town-owned parcels such as the Town Forest
- Town Forest is not eligible for WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program) funding
- The goal of the Town Forest parcel is to be available for community gathering, recreation, etc.
- Stand 1 active management recommended (potential firewood removal, etc.) in the Management Plan
- Steve added "wildlife habitat improvement" as a management recommendation for Stand 1
- Steve spoke with Mike Snyder and mentioned that the HCC wants to submit Town Forest Management Plan to the Selectboard by June 2009
- Steve will see Mike tomorrow and will be the official correspondence for the Management Plan
- HCC will vote to submit to the Selectboard at the May 2009 meeting, if possible

3. Trail grant

- The HCC submitted a grant proposal to the State of Vermont Forest Parks and Recreation (Trails and Greenways program) under the "Planning grant" category to work with VYCC to design a trail in the Town Forest
- It was noted in the program review that there is funding for "feasibility and initial planning" for new trails
- The grant proposal was not funded
- The verbal response was that the organization does not fund planning of new trails, only existing trails
- Tyler expressed frustration because there was conflict between what was written in the grant proposal guidelines (i.e., feasibility and initial planning grant available) and the verbal reasoning for why the proposal was not funded (i.e., new trail design is non-fundable)
- Tyler had spoken with office officials regarding submitting a planning grant prior to grant submission, and he was not discouraged by the Trails and Greenways program for submitting a grant to design a new trail
- The HCC can still work with the VYCC to design a trail, if funding is available, and then resubmit a grant through the Trails and Greenways program for trail construction
- FYI, Ancient Roads committee is meeting with the Town Forest access landowners this Saturday, April 11, 2009 at 9am

VI. Follow-up on Sugarmaker's Open House and thank-you notes

- Sugarmakers Open House 2009 was a huge success!
- Steve thanked Margaret Taft over email for her help in promoting
- Steve will also write a thank-you letter to all sugarmakers and to Margaret Taft

VII. Follow-up to retreat

- Alan mentioned that he wants to add Wally's HCC-sponsored calendar idea
- Also, add the library art exhibit to the list of possible HCC activities in 2009-2010

- Amy is meeting with Dean Menke from the Energy Group on Sunday, April 12, 2009 for a brainstorming session to sponsor an energy efficient homes tour
- HCC members need to prioritize retreat list
- Tabled until May meeting with the caveat that each member will come to next meeting with items we would be interested in being involved in, and the items ranked in order of importance

VIII. HCC Scenic Evaluation Methodology

- Bound methodology given to HCC members that did not previously have the methodology
- Written in 2005 by Jean Vissering
- Results of a survey is presented
- Wally presented "What are Huntington's Scenic Resources" article from June 2004 Times Ink

IX. Other business

- Discussion of salt shed and Heather Pembroke's previous monitoring of Huntington River salinity
- At the selectboard meeting, it was mentioned that the cost of the new sand/salt shed is not completely covered by the \$170,000+ grant (minimally \$100,000 under)
- In the April 6th selectboard meeting, it was mentioned that the Conservation reserve fund be used for funding the new shed

Agenda items for May 2009

- selection of chairperson
- organizational document review
- approve State of the Forest report
- review 2009 actual budget
- review annual retreat notes