

Received for Record  
November 14, 2011  
JLW  
Town Club

## Huntington Conservation Commission

### Approved Meeting Minutes

10-13-2011

#### I. Call to order

Wally Jenkins called to order the regular meeting of the HCC at 7:10 on 10/13/2011 in the Huntington Town Offices.

II. The following persons were present: Laura Hill, Wally Jenkins, Margaret Fowle, Jim Sadler, Julia Tabor, Caroline Alves, Cindy Sprague, and Aaron Worthley.

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting Wally Jenkins read the minutes from the last meeting. The minutes were approved as read.

#### IV. Open issues

- a) Screening of new committee members.
- b) Soil/flooding/wild life corridor mapping in Huntington.
- c) Selecting promising land for future purchase based on soil, flood plain, and wild-life corridor profiles.
- d) Removal of invasive species.
- e) Community outreach.
- f) Proposals for conservation fund usage.
- g) Installation of hyperion buffers.

#### V. New business

- a) Review of Jim Sadler's qualifications for committee membership.
- b) Review of Cindy Sprague's qualifications for committee membership.
- c) Caroline Alves' presentation of USDA soil mapping and rankings.
- d) Wally Jenkins may be stepping down in March.

#### Break-Down of issues

- Jim Sadler's interview begins with his HCC personal statement of interest. He would like to work to keep public green space available for recreation. Jim expresses interest in the policy research arm of local conservation.
- Margaret discusses the work the HCC has accomplished/is planning for the future.
- Wally discusses the time commitment that a new member must be willing to agree to.

- Laura discusses the expectation the committee has of a four year term on the commission.
- Jim says he was previously unaware of this requirement, but feels confident he can take this in stride and check in as need be in terms of his availability.
- USDA conservation expert Caroline Alves presents her soil slides and describes the survey tools used in creating her regional maps. She also takes time to describe the distinctions between prime agricultural lands, prime agricultural if drained, prime agricultural if irrigated, prime agricultural if protected from flooding, prime agricultural if irrigated and reclaimed of excess minerals and sodium, and agricultural land of local importance.
- Laura asks if the USDA website has capacity to evaluate the soil quality of specific lands based on location.
- Caroline says that it does but it can only evaluate one three acre parcel at a time, nothing smaller, which might be an inhibition.
- Wally asks if it is possible to overlay wild-life corridor layers on USDA soil maps.
- Caroline says that it is, but that some of the data was gathered in prior decades so it might be better to rely on Lidar (USGS) data. Kristen Underwood might be a person of interest to contact about this (she is a Bristol, VT Conservation Commissioner) and can be reached at: southmountain@gmavt.net. Aaron Worthley also has Web-mapping knowledge to draw upon, and he can be reached at aaron@arrowoodvt.com.
- It is also mentioned that Elizabeth Thompson of the VT Land Trust could be a great consultant on land quality when a local parcel goes up for sale, she can be reached at 802-656-9571.
- Wally asks if Caroline could provide us with a larger version of the USDA soils map. Also asks if we could have included on it areas of prime agricultural land, areas on flood plain, and areas of local importance.
- Caroline says this is do-able, she could meet with the HCC mid-winter to work on this project.
- Caroline also states that she can make time to consult on any piece of land that the HCC is seriously considering- she can be reached at: [Caroline.Alves@vt.usda.gov](mailto:Caroline.Alves@vt.usda.gov)
- Cindy Sprague's interview begins with her HCC personal statement of interest. She would like to work on community outreach, gathering volunteers, and trail planning in the Huntington Forest. She would like to address the issue of invasives along the Winooski watershed. Ms. Sprague also believes that programs

like photography sharing and organized nature walks help draw community support, and would like to bring more of these about.

- Laura discusses the expectation the committee has of a four year term on the commission.
- Cindy feels more comfortable jumping into the last three years of a vacated term rather than starting at the beginning of a new one.
- Cindy asks what some of the more important attributes of a Conservation Commissioner are.
- Laura mentions that things to be aware of moving forward in terms of conservation are items mentioned by the Union of Concerned Scientists. These include: habitat destruction, introduced species, climate change, and over-exploitation of resources.
- Margaret answers that knowledge of ecology and conservation are good, but energy and enthusiasm are better, and that is what she hopes Cindy will bring to the table.
- Cindy asks where she can lend her energy best, and the topic of the Huntington Town Forest comes up.
- Margaret mentions that a forestry plan with trail work was drawn up at one point, and that Cindy can take it home with her if she so desires.
- Cindy borrows the booklet to bring home and look over, she mentions that she thinks support for town forest trails and entrusted land can be won through community forums such as Front Porch Forum, The Times Ink, and group events.
- Wally mentions that toward March of this year he may be thinking of stepping down after nine years, mentions that he is pulled in many directions and it may be time to leave the Commission.

## **VI. Adjournment**

**Wally Jenkins** adjourned the meeting at **9:15 PM**.

Minutes submitted by: Julia Tabor

Minutes approved by: HCC