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DATE December 23, 2013

Huntington Conservation Commission - NOTES

Meeting Date: Tuesday, November 19, 2013, 7pm
Members Present: Cindy Sprague, Margaret Fowle, Roman Livak, Leah Korce
Public Present: Dave Brautigam, CHSA

Meeting was called to order at: 7:13pm

Review and Approve Minutes from Last Meeting, Review Mail

- Mail
  - Letter re: access to Rosemary Kings land for the ECOS
  - Vermont Land Trust publications
- Meeting minutes 10/15
  - Caitlin – these are approved as of the last round of edits that Margaret sent

Public Questions and Comments

- Dave Brautigam – Town Forest trail proposal, he stated that the Camel's Hump Ski Association(CHSA) was disappointed that the HCC disapproved of their proposal regarding trail clearing
  - Consensus of the CHSA that they would like to come back together in the spring and discuss the topic of motorized vehicles and clearing a bit further with the HCC
  - Roman stated that he believed that trails on State lands which are also in the area did not allow motor vehicles either.
  - Discussion of grooming the Woodchuck Ramble Trail, improving that trail after heavy logging
  - Margaret – stated that the CHSA should see if they are going to get their trail cleared before winter and that the HCC could revisit the issue in the spring, after a winter of potential skiing.
  - Cindy – stated Huntington Town Forrest Plan does not allow motorized vehicles in the area, the HCC decision was influenced by the this policy
  - Roman – in response to comment about logging in the area by Dave, stated that logging was not mentioned in the State of the Forrest.
  - Discussion of the state of the Huntington Town Forest remaining in possession of the town.

Potential Land Purchase for Town

- Mayo Road property has been identified as a potential HCC purchase for a town forest
- Landowner's willingness to sell to HCC dependent on their ability to sell and HCC ability to purchase the property
  - Various steps would have to completed before the HCC could secure grant money to furnish purchasing the land

- Idea of speaking to the Huntington Historical Community Trust (HHCT)
    - Margaret will reach out to HHCT regarding funding ideas
    - Form a separate committee to triage? the purchase of the Mayo Road property through grants, other funding sources
    - HCC members should identify people who may be willing, and have expertise to serve on the committee. some HCCT members may be good candidates)

Audubon Proposal Update

- Roman stated that HCC should not have had a discussion via email regarding the HCC support of the Audubon with $1000 of Conservation Funds, he states we should have called an Open Meeting per the Open Meeting Laws of Vermont (1 VSA Chapter 5)
    - He states that he should have jumped in and stated that we needed to have a meeting.
- Roman stated that he made the proposal at the Select board (that did not support the HCC proposal to fund the Audubon) because he makes lot of motions, that he doesn't necessarily agree with all the motions he makes.
    - Margaret, Cindy, and Leah all stated that their disappointment that the Select board voted against the HCC recommendation to fund the Audubon with $1000
    - Roman mentioned that the Select board mentioned last evening that they could 'rework' their process of voting for or against recommendations regarding expenditures of the Conservation Funds.
        - Establish criteria so recommendations and ideas are not discredited.
    - Public Meeting to comment on this issue is Monday, December 16th.
        - Next HCC meeting – Tuesday, December 17th

Project Updates, Review and Follow Through

- ECOS
    - Margaret – reviewed the last meeting she attended agenda and topics
        - ECOS committee is going to have final draft of their findings in December; meet with individual towns to review
        - Huntington review will be Tuesday, January 28th, 6pm in Huntington Library
            - Some Huntington Findings:
                - Little use of potential deer yards
                - Good mast year for turkeys, bear
                - Lot of wildlife use wetlands
                - Dry oak forests in uplands
        - After Huntington Review, HCC involvement with ECOS should be complete

    - Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) will be helping conservation and planning commissions incorporate the results of the ECOS study into their Town Plans.
        - Huntington Town Plan on a different timeline from the other town so the findings will not be incorporated into this version of the town plan
        - VNRC hopes to 'reenergize' conservation commissions in the towns

- Invasives
    - Roman working towards having Highway Department receive $1400 in budget for roadside cutting/maintenance
- Next Special Places Tour
    - Burnt Rock Pond – snowshoe/hike
    - Mayo Road property if landowner is still interested in potential HCC purchase
    - Wetland property?
- Sugarmakers Open House
    - Save the date for the end of March, can discuss at next meeting
    - Sugarmakers appreciate HCC support
- Letters of Support
    - None

Annual Report – Deadline is January 15th

- Annual Report is for Town Meeting Day Report
- Margaret will send 2012 Report as an example of/basis for 2013 Report
    - Include photos from Special Places Fall Walk and Salamander Crossing Volunteers

Winter Meeting – Time Change?

- Discussion amongst members about switching dates, weeks for meetings
    - No change made

Other Business

- Selling Salamander Crossing signs, $10?
- Town Plan Final Draft has been published (available on Town Website) out for public comment
    - Public Hearing: December 5, 2013, 7pm, Huntington Public Library
    - Leah will put together comments on the HCC sections (Land Use, Natural Resources, etc.) from the HCC in one document for presentation at this meeting
        - Please send these comments to Leah by December 1st via email

Meeting was adjourned at 8:46pm

Approved Minutes sent to Town Clerk 12/20/13