

RECEIVED

DATE *January 27, 2014*

****APPROVED** Meeting Minutes
Huntington Conservation Commission
12/17/2013**

Commissioners in attendance: JB Bryan, Cindy Sprague, Margaret Fowle, Roman Livak; Rebecca Ryan (arrived at 8:00)

Cindy calls meeting to order at 7:04

Review and approve minutes, review mail:

- Cindy motions to approve Oct. & Nov. minutes; all in favor. Motion passes/

Public Questions and Comments:

- No public questions and/or comments

Huntington River Domain Registration Fund Request

- Aaron Worthley present to make request.
- Roughly \$10/year to register website domain with new provider. Previously using service that costs \$30/yr. Aaron will be switching site to cheaper provider and does not anticipate any issues with this switch.
- In the past, HCC has funded this- domain registration is the only fixed costs associated with the project- lab worked is typically covered by grant. Sometimes small costs related to maintenance. HCC could allocate small amount each year for incidentals if necessary.
- **Roman motions to approve up to \$60 for the cost of registering domain name; Cindy seconds- all in favor; motion passes**
- JB questions placement of monitoring equipment. Aaron has experimented with other sites and there are no other real options. Visibility also helps raise awareness about the project.
- Slim volunteer year for river sample takers.
- Results of flooding event on July 3, 2013- Huntington River had 7 ft. depth change at Horeshoe Bend. New monitoring equipment captures this data.

Town Hall Committee

- Aaron Worthley present to update
- Town Hall Committee (THC) has received both grants they have applied for (totaling roughly \$100K: \$25K from Vermont Arts Council; \$75K from VCDP)
- Project budget is roughly \$120K with construction costs, which includes in-kind labor and service donations by Town Hall Committee.
- At this point, grants should cover constructions costs, however they have no surplus funds to cover construction if it exceeds estimate.
- THC is concerned about contingency plans; VCDP has imposed requirements that roof needs to be replaced and heating system needs to be installed.
- THC is pursuing other grants to cover any additional costs, however they do not feel secure in having surplus budget. Desire 10% contingency buffer/amount.

- Project must be completed September 2014 when VT Arts Council grant expires, so project will be happening quickly in the spring. THC does not want to be in position where they are launching into construction in April, and then have to go through 3 month waiting period. Requesting preapproval of funds, however if the funds are not needed for construction, then the funds would never be expensed.
- THC would have to make formal application to HCC with explanation of how project meets fund.
- THC should ask Selectboard before putting time into application since ultimate approval lies with them.
- Does this request Conservation Fund guidelines? Historic preservation is clearly in guidelines.
- This would most likely not be last request of THC to Conservation Fund- the building will need many other levels of repairs.
- Cindy encourages THC to have preliminary discussion with Selectboard pertaining to “contingency funding” idea.
- Roman has not been pleased with process or requests going from Selectboard and HCC. Selectboard has not approved last two requests passed along from HCC, process for recommendation and approval should be better defined. Causing frustrations.
- THC is focused on completion on this defined construction phase before addressing other existing issues with the building.
- Concept of specific funding request is perhaps better approach.
- THC is primarily focused on finding funding from outside town sources.
- Roman is concerned about “contingency” request passing Selectboard- more like a line of credit. Concern about setting precedent regarding funds for projects that may not happen.
- HCC recommends applying for \$10K and if THC does not funds in this phase, then they can save it as budget.
- THC need funds in April at the latest- should submit application by next January meeting (1/21/13)- ideally should submit application a few days prior to HCC meeting.

Audubon Proposal Update

- Public Comment on Audubon request, all public comments seemed in favor.
- Selectboard will consider at 1/6/13 meeting.

Annual report- Due January 15, 2013

- Have to update for 2013- all HCC have pieces done by January 7th to email to Cindy
- Different members will provide updates on each section:
 - Invasives- Cindy (and Rebecca for parsnip)
 - Natural resource inventory- Margaret
 - Natural resource monitoring- Aaron Worthley can provide details on monitoring project
 - Conservation fund applications- Audubon (Rebecca?)
 - Sugar makers open house update- JB
 - Salamanders- Cindy
 - Retiring and new members- Cindy
 - Special places tour- Roman
- Photos- Roman will submit photo's to Heidi

Project Updates

ECOS

- Rebecca has posters to print and post
- Arrowwood will present results January 28th at 6:00pm

Invasives

- Rebecca created initial draft of poster- good balance of information and caution
- Circulate via: Times Ink, Library, FPF, events

Special Places tour

- Burnt Rock Pond- perhaps in the spring?
- Gillett Pond/Swamp tracking on Huntington side during the winter.
- Timing- Saturday or Sunday; mornings work better; 9:30; Mid-February when there is more daylight.
- Decide date at next HCC meeting

Sugar Makers Open House

- Timed too early last year- March 23rd.
- Used to be last Saturday in March.
- Aim for last Saturday in March (March 29th)
- Open house weekend for the state will be March 22/23
- Discuss with Taft's ideal date/

Town Forest Purchase

- Cindy contacted Lynda Swannie about potentially working with her to purchase parcel on Mayo Road. Initial response was that "she would think about it". Asked for a date on when we would have an answer and have not received response.

Gillett Pond Dam

Public in attendance: Ernie Bueford (Richmond Conservation Commission), Wally Jenkins, Nancy Stoddard- volunteered to organize joint town effort "Friends of Gillett Pond", Linda Gionti, Dana Cummings, Barbara Elliot- Town Administrator, Aaron Worthey, Mark Smith

- "Friends of Gillett Pond" group formed after news was released that Girl Scouts of America, who own dam, are considering removing the Dam.
- Built in 1902 for power generation- generated power until 1910.
- Girls Scouts gained ownership in 1950. They own flowage rights, but don't own land around dam (Lowe's own property)
- Damaged in flood in 1927; 1960- unauthorized breach of dam which lowered level of dam
- July 2013- dam lost upper tier of stonework, but Dam held; this flood event prompted a state inspection
- 7/12/13- state inspection- found state of dam is in poor condition and needs replacement or removal.
- State recommended state be repaired or removed, with roughly \$200-300K to replace dam
- Girl Scouts are interested in reducing or eliminating their risks associated with ownership.
- 3 ft wide, 150ft long, 8 ft tall maximum. Drains 1500 acres.

- Goal of "Friends of Gillett Pond"- gather information and support. Will manage website that releases information for public.
- HCC was invited to be part of the group. Intention of the meeting this evening is to assess what HCC's role should be, gather feedback from group on would like HCC to do.
- Lakes and Ponds committee of State did two day assessment of pond for habitat criteria- recommended taking Dam out to preserve wildlife area due to likelihood of or recurrence of events and water quality issues at present. They found area should revert to natural state of streams and wetlands.
- Classified as mesotrophic- due to shallow depths, water temperature is increasing and no longer can hold oxygen and support wildlife. With sedimentation reducing depth, it is transitioning to eutrophic.
- State is adjacent landowner. Do they see as recreational body? Do they have any interest in preserving recreational habitat?
- Richmond Conservation Commission- anticipated requests for funds to support the projects.
- Richmond Selectboard supportive of effort to do something about the Dam.
- Huntington Conservation Commission- fund clearly stated for projects within Huntington- how does this relate to Dam outside of Huntington.
- What is cost of removing dam? Most likely least-cost option.
- Could dam generate power again? Consideration for rebuilding dam.
- Aaron Worthley requests formal support and relationship from HCC for "Friends of Gillett Pond" group.
- Rebecca motions that HCC joins the friends of Gillett Pond to ensure HCC has information they need regarding removal or restoration of dam. Discussion ensues.
- FoGP- want formal support, resources, and critical thought from HCC
- Do we need motion or public statement of support?
- At this point, HCC agrees that it's appropriate for Cindy & Margaret to join FoGP meetings, and HCC will address more formal steps as situation develops.

Member recruitment

- Jim officially resigned
- Leah officially resigned
- After March- members will be JB, Roman, and Rebecca
- How to recruit and maintain members?

Cindy motions to end meeting 9:15, Margaret seconds, all in favor

Next Steps

- All members submit draft pieces of annual report to Cindy by January 7th.
- Rebecca- send draft of Invasives poster to Cindy
- Margaret- confirm with Taft's that March 29th might work

Draft minutes sent to Town Clerk: 12/20/ 2013

Approved minutes sent to Town Clerk: 1/25/14