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May 18, 2015

**Huntington Conservation Commission Minutes**  
**Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> 2015**

**7:00 pm – 9:00 pm Town Office Lower Level**

**Commission Members in Attendance:** Margaret Fowle, Rebecca Ryan, John JB Bryan, Darlene Palumbo, Jenna Whitson & Sheri Lynn

**Commission Members Absent:** Roman Livak



7:10 Review and approve minutes from last meeting, review mail.

- Sheri motioned to approve the minutes from the February meeting as written. Second by Margaret. Motion passes unanimously.
- Review and edits needed on the March minutes. More bullets are needed from highlights of Karen Bates' presentation, need to record the idea about bringing together Richmond and Huntington for a community discussion, and need more specifics about the decision to not offer comment of land use regulations (the request was between meetings – more about timing of request and not about not having enough time). Rebecca will send Jenna the email with explanation to DRB. Roman will make edits to minutes to send out for approval.

**Public Comment:** No public comment tonight

**Catamount Trail Easement: Amy Kelsey, Executive Director of the Catamount Trail Association (CTA)**

*Overview and discussion:*

- Discussed CTA's interest in obtaining an easement from the Town of Huntington for the portion of the existing CTA trail and to extend the CTA trail on already existing Camel's Hump Challenge Trail that run through the Huntington Town Forest for the purposes of connectivity of the cross-country ski trail. One section of the trail already exists on the property, but there is no formal use agreement.
- The Catamount Trail is a cross-country ski trail that run the length of VT. Amy Kelsey shared a map of the trail in this region demonstrating parts of the trail that are currently under an easement from the landowner (in green) and parts where there is permission, but no formal agreement (in blue). The organization's job is to "color the blue parts of the map green." Amy provided a basic template for an easement, but the agreement could be flexible depending on the needs of the town. The preference would be an agreement in perpetuity, but there are other options with differing lengths of time, for example a long-term lease agreement. If approved, CTA would maintain the trail for winter use, and would be willing to work together on maintaining for other use, or collaborate to access funding for improvements.
- Discussed the fact that the recommendations in the State of the Forest report for the Huntington Town Forest does recommend an easement both for the Catamount Trail and for the Camels Hump Challenge Trail (the other trail located on the property).
- Discussed the possibility of collaborating with CTA to improve access to the Huntington Town Forest while helping them to secure more formal access throughout Huntington.
- Discussed the need to determine whether there is an easement for the Camels Hump Challenge trail and what that arrangement is.
- Discussed the issue of insurance/liability. Amy explained that it would not likely be an issue. CTA can provide a certificate of insurance, private landowners are protected by the Liability Law, and there is no service provided for a fee.

○ Next steps:

1. Sheri motioned to follow recommendations the State of the Forest report and to recommend to the Selectboard that they pursue the easement on the existing trails and pursue the process needed to finalize the agreement. Second by Rebecca. Motion passed unanimously.
  2. The commission will send a written recommendation to the Selectboard. Rebecca will follow up with Barbara Elliot. Amy Kelsey and Commission members will attend Selectboard meeting when it is on the agenda.
  3. Margaret will ask Aaron and Amy will check in with race organizers about how the Camels Hump Challenge trail got access.
  4. The Commission will continue to pursue the conversation about collaborating with CTA to identify further opportunities for access to the town forest.
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**Work plan**

Rebecca will put the work plan on Google Docs and share with the Commission.

*Town Forest:*

- After reading the State of the Forest report, we need to give it our best shot to get access to the Town Forest before we give up on it.
- The Commission will continue to explore access options.

○ Next steps:

1. Sheri will draft a letter to property owner Ramos Pizzagalli to open the discussion about town forest access.
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*Stormwater Runoff:*

- Darlene submitted the Stormwater Runoff article to the Times Ink.

*Wild Parsnip Insert:*

- The insert will cost \$85 to include it in Huntington Residents' Times Ink paper. It is more to include it in the Richmond papers.
- Commission agreed to only include it in the Huntington papers.

○ Next steps:

1. Margaret motioned to spend the \$85 to include the insert in the Huntington papers. Second by Sheri. Motion passed unanimously.
  2. Rebecca will get inserts to the Times Ink.
  3. Rebecca will ask Barbara Elliot to post the electronic flyer when the insert comes out.
  4. JB will check in with Roman about calling Yogi and asking to ride around to identify high priority areas for mowing to relay to his crew once the wild parsnip starts coming up. Main Road is bad, Hinesburg Hollow. Needs to be mowed before it goes to seed. Prior to seed formation (June) with a follow up mowing. JB will then follow up with a posting on Front Porch Forum announcing the work to the town and asking residents to pull where the mower can't get to.
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*Amphibian Crossing Update:*

- The ground has been too frozen. There hasn't been any activity yet here.
- It is supposed to rain at the end of this week and could be the first big movement in Huntington.
  
- Next steps:

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  1. Margaret will connect Sheri and Darlene with Cindy Sprague's email list.

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*Membership Recruitment/Co-Chair/Minutes taker:*

- Discussed the need to recruit someone to take minutes.
- Members recognized Margaret Fowle's leadership and commitment to the Commission in the many years she has served. Margaret was a pleasure to work with and will certainly be missed.
- With Margaret leaving we have a co-chair opening. Margaret nominated Sheri. Darlene seconds. Motion passed unanimously.

Next steps:

1. Rebecca motioned to post an ad in the Times Ink costing no more than \$50 to advertise a note-taking position. Second by Darlene. Motion passed unanimously.
  2. Margaret will send the ad to Rebecca and Rebecca will send to the Times Ink.
  3. Jenna will post an ad in Front Porch Forum to recruit new members.
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**Other business/Updates: HPC follow up, Sugarmakers' Open House Gillette Pond Overview & Discussion, Karen Bates, State of Vermont**

- Rebecca received an email back from Mark Smith in response to the email about comments on the land use regulation. The commission is recommending that the references to the ECOS maps are removed because they have not been verified. If the regulations continue to reference the ECOS maps, HCC recommends that regulations include a footnote that the maps are not field verified maps. Rebecca will respond to ask for a footnote to be included.
- Sugarmakers' Open House was a success! The turnout was great and people were boiling.
- Suggestion for next year, it may be worth it to get some numbers to put on the Sugarmakers open house signs to advertise further in advance.
- Rebecca reminded members that Heidi gets a discount for printing through the town and does not pay sales tax. When we print, we should ask to print through town instead of directly to Staples.
- Jenna will attend the Town Resolution at the Statehouse. Jenna will email Rebecca Ellis and Senator Bray to let them know she will be attending the resolution.
- Rebecca will try to go to the Forest Fragmentation press conference at the Statehouse.

9:00 **Adjourn**

Draft minutes submitted by Jenna Whitson on 4/17/15

Approved: May 14, 2015

Recorded: May 18, 2015