

Town of Huntington — Huntington Conservation Commission (HCC) Meeting



Thursday, 9 June 2016—7:00  
 Huntington Library  
 \*\* APPROVED \*\* MINUTES

RECEIVED  
 DATE July 26 2016

Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and approve the minutes, review mail, welcome Natalie Beckwith</li> <li>• Public Comment</li> <li>• Review Budget</li> <li>• <u>Work Plan</u> - HCC Priority Efforts                         <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Town Forest – Public Input (Jenna and Sheri)                                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review sample surveys – what do we want to know now to gage community’s vision</li> <li>• Next steps</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Storm Water (Darlene)</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <u>Work Plan</u> – Other Efforts: Promotion: Salamander Crossing Brochure (Rebecca)                         <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invasive: Continued discussion and assignments</li> <li>2. Events: HHCT coordination to take on Sugar Makers (Sheri)</li> <li>3. Conversation Funds: Do we anticipate applications and if so when?</li> <li>4. Next Steps: How can we best use/share/update this document (e.g. google docs)?</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Other Business – Decide or vote on Meeting Location (public library or town office)</li> <li>• Set next meeting’s agenda – Do we want to take one month off in the summer</li> <li>• Adjourn</li> </ul>
<b>Members present:</b>	Sheri Lynn (Co-Chair), Rebecca Ryan (Co-Chair), Darlene Palola, Jenna Koloski, JB Bryan, and Maggie Mae Anderson at call to order. Guthrie Smith arrived at 19:07.
<b>Staff/Officials present</b>	Natalie Beckwith, HCC Clerk
<b>Others present</b>	Aaron Worthley, Barbara Felitti, Terry Boyle representing the Town Hall Committee
<b>Call to order</b>	Rebecca Ryan called the meeting to order at 19:04.
<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>Topic:</b> Review and approve the minutes, review mail, welcome Natalie Beckwith  <b>MOTION</b>	<p><b>MOTION:</b> Jenna Whitson motioned to approve the minutes, Darlene Palola 2nd. Passed unanimously of attendees.</p> <p>Co-chairs expressed a warm welcome to the new members (Guthrie Smith and Maggie Mae Anderson) and the new Clerk (Natalie Beckwith). All attendees introduced themselves to the group.</p> <p>No mail</p>

<p><b>Topic: Public Comment</b></p>	<p>Barbara Felitti of the Huntington Town Hall Committee (THC) opened by thanking the HCC and briefly describing the significant impact of the grant they received. Aaron Worthley and Felitti provided an update on the status of the Town Hall restoration. The THC is focusing their efforts on opening Town Hall for public use. The opening will be incremental and will begin this summer. Outstanding work on the structure includes insulation and heating and then after this summer they will explore enhancement projects.</p> <p>The THC representatives were in attendance in order to discuss an unexpected issue that arose during restoration work. Asbestos tape was found in some of the attic ductwork and this necessitated stopping all work until the issue assessed and dealt with. The THC representatives were explicit in their desire to explain that the issue was a total surprise to them. No one along the way recommended an asbestos inspection and catching the issue earlier would have saved time and money. Worthley and Felitti said that the state should push for anyone getting a grant to test for asbestos. The cost of the work is about \$14k. The THC has reserve funds that are earmarked for operational expenses once the Town Hall is open and does not have \$14k for additional pre-opening expenses. The THC has already spoken with the Selectboard and they were asked to apply to the HCC for use of the Conservation Fund. Felitti asked if it was possible to apply for a grant for a second time. Sheri Lynn said that there is nothing that says that you can't apply for a grant more than once. The HCC will have to review the intent of the Conservation Fund to determine if the after-the-fact asbestos removal cost is an appropriate use of the Fund.</p> <p>Worthley pointed out that during their initial conversation with HCC about a grant they did discuss coming back again at a later date and that the group was generally open to the idea. Felitti said that the THC had originally applied for the their clearly packaged and anticipated needs and is now not sure what the right path forward is for funds for the asbestos removal. They were directed by the Selectboard to approach the HCC but defer to the HCC to determine whether it's a good idea for them to reapply for a grant. Lynn pulled up the criteria for using the Conservation Fund and noted that it was available online.</p> <p>Whitson asked Felitti if they had explored other funding options. Felitti said they had but can't get funding for this type of after-the-fact/unanticipated cost. If it had been a part of their plans it could have been included in their original funding package but it was unknown.</p> <p>Bryant asked why the removal is necessary and Aaron explained what they were told about the regulatory requirements. Special precautions are needed when insulating around asbestos. Ryan read an example of criteria for the Fund and suggested that their project seemed to fit that particular criterion. Ryan and Lynn suggested that they apply for another grant.</p> <p>Worthley said that once open they would plan for some elective and cosmetic enhancements. He asked if it makes sense to spend extra time coming up with a new package including some of the elective work and apply for a larger sum. They aren't sure if they will be ready to do so in time but want to keep the possibility open. Lynn said that they might have a stronger application if were to include all of the work because it might help the application meet more of the criteria. Discussion of the THC reapplying for a grant concluded.</p> <p>Worthley was present on behalf do the Huntington River Conservation Partnership also. He has been coordinating the Huntington River water quality sampling for the last 15 years. The project started as an HCC initiative when Worthley was on the commission and is now a partnership with Richmond. They need volunteers to collect samples in Huntington, Richmond, and a few other locations. Sampling starts in June. Worthley invited HCC members to volunteer to collect samples. Samples are usually collected on Tuesday mornings and are dropped off at the post office by 7:30. They will begin reaching out to the public this weekend and</p>
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ACTION	<a href="http://www.huntingtonriver.org/">http://www.huntingtonriver.org/</a> allows you to sign up for an email list for information and results.
	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Ryan will be sent the post for water sampling volunteers ahead of time and she will distribute to HCC members.</p> <p>THC members departed at 19:45.</p>
<b>Topic: Review Budget</b>	<p>Ryan stated that there were three weeks left to spend money in this fiscal year. There is \$45 left in programs. Guthrie would like to do something on invasives but hasn't been able to find anything. She will keep looking. There is \$145 left in operating supplies and nothing is needed. There is \$500 available to purchase services. Darlene mentioned that at the last meeting they talked about hiring someone to work on their work plan. She believes that they voted to spend up to about \$100 but no one remembered the exact amount agreed upon. Ryan suggested that they move on the agenda items relating to the Work Plan and then return to the topic.</p> <p>Ryan asked if there was anything else to discuss around the budget. Lynn pointed out that they never seem to use all of the money reserved for purchase services.</p>

<p><b>Topic:</b> <b>Work Plan - HCC</b> <b>Priority Efforts</b></p>	<p>Town Forest- Lynn and Whitson provided an update on the effort to gather public input on the Town Forest. They had reached out to discover what other towns are using to collect data points from town members and received copies of survey questions used by other towns. Lynn read some of the example questions. Whitson said she thought they should ask the questions asked at the forum on the Town Forest along with some of the relevant example questions. Lynn recommended that the questions be revised to be less open ended due to the need for quantitative data. Some key questions might be “Do you know where the town forest is?”; “Do you want to sell the town forest?”; “Have you ever hiked, bird-watched, etc. in the Town Forest?”</p> <p>Lynn and Whitson agreed that they need to include a way to ask town members to rank how important an accessible town forest is to them. The forum on the Town Forest suggests that there is community support to have one town forest for conservation purposes and another for recreational use.</p> <p>Bryant recommended that they ask a question about who should be consulted before making decisions about the Town Forest. There was general agreement.</p> <p>Whitson remarked that she didn’t know a good way to ask the “do you want to sell the Town Forest” question. It was asked in an open-ended manner at the forum. Bryant said it needs to be a long question with lots of information and clear background. Speaking as a member of the public, Beckwith recommended using “Option A” and “Option B” statements as a way of presenting both sides of the argument. The survey would provide two statements, one summarizing the argument to sell and one summarizing the argument to keep the Town Forest. The person taking the survey would indicate which statement they prefer. There was general agreement on this approach.</p>
<p><b>ACTION</b></p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Ryan will ask someone at her work who designs surveys to review the draft of the survey once complete and make sure that there is no bias.</p>
<p><b>ACTION</b></p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Lynn will take the first stab at drafting the survey questions because Whitson will be away. She will use the relevant examples from other towns and develop the Options A and Option B statements about whether to sell. Whitson will review at the end of June and then will pass along to the rest of the Commission for review. Timeline: Tentatively they will have something to look at in July, but August is acceptable.</p>
	<p>Storm Water- Palola provided an update on the storm water project. She has been exploring funding options. The state has funds available for towns that have a plan in place. They will need to demonstrate that over time they will remove so much sediment. Palola said she attended a meeting in Hinesburg with their Conservation Commission. They recommended that when people see notices about the new storm water standards they should send in comments and concerns. There is contention over some of the new standards, particularly the agricultural ones, and a lot of worry about the impact on farmers. Palola also attended the Huntington Planning Commission meeting and shared information about storm water. She said the Planning Commission will be discussing the topic future meetings. Ryan asked that another member of the HCC fill in at the Planning Commission meetings when Palola cannot attend and volunteered to do so if no one else could.</p> <p>Palola is working with Ann Smith from Friends of the Winooski River to research funding sources and will recommend funding sources for the town of Huntington. Friends of the Winooski River might be able to write or help write grants. Lynn and several other members expressed uncertainty about the scope of the current HCC effort. Palola said the current timeline is for completing the design and then applying for grant money.</p>

<p><b>Topic:</b> <b>Work Plan –</b> <b>Other Efforts:</b> <b>Promotion:</b></p>	<p>Salamander Crossing- Ryan started off by saying that the Salamander Crossing brochure is in bad shape and needs work and that John Haddon has volunteered his time to redesign the brochure. Ryan asked if they should change the name to “Amphibian Crossing”. The group unanimously agreed to change the name.</p> <p>Bryant asked how the brochure will be distributed and what is the goal of the brochure. The group agreed that it was originally for raising awareness. Bryant suggested it could be a guide for identifying amphibians because kids are interested in the topic. It could be distributed at Brewster-Pierce to get kids involved. They should have a poster (at Beaudry’s and other town spots) and also have an identification guide. Ryan suggested that it may be possible to buy some guides that already exist.</p> <p>Whitson said she liked the idea of shiny rap cards with information to engage volunteers that include a link to the website with more information. Bryant suggested a challenge or contest to engage kids and families. Anderson agreed that motivate the school by having a contest between different classes was a good idea.</p> <p>Whitson pointed out that there were two things being discussed: informational materials and school engagement and they should work with the Audubon on the school engagement piece. Ryan summarized the discussion and said that they would make smaller handouts on card stock with lighter information than the current brochure and volunteer information, and also look into buying identification guides. Bryant reiterated that they should get something into the schools, something that goes home in a kid’s backpack.</p>
<p><b>ACTION</b></p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Anderson volunteered to spearhead a school engagement effort. Ryan and Anderson will reach out the Audubon to discuss collaboration and find out if they have identification information for the guides.</p>
<p><b>ACTION</b></p>	<p>Invasives- The Commission moved on to the topic of invasives. Ryan recommended that they ask Heidi Racht to run the article on invasives again because this is the time of year they want people to be thinking of this. A plan was discussed for next steps on the invasives effort.</p>
<p><b>ACTION</b></p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Ryan will leave copies of the invasives handout in the library and other popular town locations.</p>
<p><b>ACTION</b></p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Smith will ask Heidi Racht to run the article. Bryant and Smith will post a link to the handout on FPF (Front Porch Forum).</p>
<p><b>ACTION</b></p>	<p>Ryan mentioned that the group had previously talked about co-hosting presentations on invasives and potentially bringing in Elizabeth Spinney, from the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, to speak. Lynn said that they had also discussed reaching out to the HHCT (Huntington Conservation Community Trust) to get their schedule of events to coordinate.</p>
<p><b>ACTION</b></p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Smith will think about an event for invasives by the next meeting. She hoped to see if there is someone local who would be a good speaker.</p>
<p><b>ACTION</b></p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Anderson will ask her friend who wrote a book on Vermont wildflowers if she would be interested in speaking on invasives.</p>
<p><b>ACTION</b></p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Lynn will reach out to HHCT and find out if they have anything planned on invasives.</p>

ACTION	<p>Sugar Makers- Ryan asked if there was an update on the Sugar Makers event. Lynn said that their contact from the HHCT had lost track of the list of events. Lynn also asked them for their work plan and offered to share HCC's work plan. Will find out after June 16 if they will take on coordination of the event. If not, HCC will have to keep doing it but will begin planning earlier. Ryan said they could plan to just drop the press release, make sure they got the brochure out and post on FPF and in the Times Ink!.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Ryan will resend the Sugar Makers information to the HHCT so they have it for their next meeting.</p>
ACTION	<p>Special Events- Lynn reminded that last year they hiked the Town Forest. There was a recommendation to hike Burnt Rock from the Huntington side but the plan fell through. Lynn asked the group if they should plan something for this summer or if they were overcommitted. The consensus was that there is a lot going on this summer and the Commission would wait until fall for an event.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Ryan will check with the Audubon about events this summer to collaborate with them and/or see if the Commission could provide scholarships for kids who want to participate in programs.</p>
ACTION	<p>Conservation Fund- In discussing the status of the Conservation Fund there was consensus that they would likely receive an application from the THC. Anderson asked if there was any outreach to let people know they can apply to use the Fund. Bryant said it would be a good idea to educate the community about the Fund and ask what they want to do with it. Anderson said that she didn't think there was a lot a lot of public knowledge about the HCC or the Conservation Fund.</p> <p>Ryan brought up the options to have a column in the Times Ink! and/or post on FPF monthly or at least regularly. Bryant said that they should use part of the monthly meeting to decide on topic for a blurb in the Times Ink!. He liked the idea of providing a narrative of the meetings and what's going on. Lynn said they should use multiple venues to spread awareness of what they do. Smith suggested a blurb in the Times Ink once a season with what they've been talking about and what's coming up. The Commission agreed to pick four target editions (September, December, March and June), one a quarter, and take turns writing the column.</p>
ACTION	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Smith will ask Heidi Racht about having a quarterly column in the Times Ink!.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Palola will write the first article, deadline September 14. The topic is TBD.</p>
ACTION	<p>Work Plan- Ryan prompted the group to discuss the best way of using and sharing the work plan. The group would like to use some of the money for purchase services to have the work plan reformatted and set up to be shared and updated online. Beckwith was asked to take on this project and agreed. The Commission agreed that each member would make updates to the work plan relevant to their projects/tasks before each meeting.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Beckwith will take on the project of reworking the work plan, will make it sharable online and provide instructions on how to access and update it. She will bill for the time spent on the project, up to the amount previously agreed upon by the Commission (believed to be about \$100, but needs to be confirmed). Beckwith will also put a <a href="#">link to the work plan</a> in the meeting minutes.</p>

<b>ACTION</b>	<p>Link to the work plan: <a href="#">Work Plan FY2017</a></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Lynn and Ryan will send a reminder for members to update the work plan with the agenda each month.</p>
<b>Topic:</b> <b>Other Business</b> – Decide or vote on Meeting Location (public library or town office)	<p>The group prefers to meet at the public library.</p>
<b>Topic:</b> <b>Set next meeting's agenda – Do we want to take one month off in the summer</b>	<p>The Commission considered canceling the July meeting because Palola and Bryant are unable to attend. The Commission will meet in July because there are active projects that require a meeting. Members present unanimously approved to cancel the August meeting.</p>
<b>Adjourn MOTION</b>	<p><b>MOTION:</b> Ryan motioned and Lynn seconded to adjourn the meeting at 21:06. Passed unanimously.</p>
	<p>9 June 2016 – HCC monthly meeting at the Huntington Public Library  13 June 2016– Draft/unapproved minutes sent to Town Clerk for website posting  July 14 2016 – Final/approved minutes approved  July 18 2016 – Approved minutes sent to Town Clerk for recording &amp; website posting</p>