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Town of Huntington — Huntington Conservation Commission (HCC) Meeting

Thursday, 14 July 2016—7:00
 Huntington Public Library
 ** APPROVED ** MINUTES

Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review and approve the minutes & review mail ● Public Comment ● Work Plan - HCC Priority Efforts <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Town Forest 2. Storm Water – Darlene is away, Ryan/Lynn will provide update ● Work Plan <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work Plan Document: Current status (Natalie) 2. Invasives: Continued discussion and assignments 3. Herps brochure: Ryan 4. Events: HHCT coordination to take on Sugar Makers (Lynn) 5. Conservation Fund: Review process with new members (Ryan) ● Other Business ● Set next meeting's agenda (No August meeting) ● Adjourn
Members present:	Sheri Lynn (Co-Chair), Rebecca Ryan (Co-Chair), Jenna Koloski, Maggie Mae Anderson, Guthrie Smith
Members absent:	JB Bryan, Darlene Paola, and Roman Livak
Staff/Officials present	Natalie Beckwith, HCC Clerk
Others present	None
Call to order	Sheri Lynn called the meeting to order at 19:10.
Agenda	Discussion
Topic: Review and approve the minutes, review mail MOTION	MOTION: Ryan moved to approve the minutes, Koloski 2nd. Passed unanimously of attendees. No mail
Topic: Public Comment	None

<p>Topic: Work Plan - HCC Priority Efforts</p>	<p>Town Forest- The attendees began a discussion of the Town Forest survey which Lynn and Koloski had been working on. Commission members received a draft of the survey via email and were asked to review before the meeting. Lynn also distributed hard copies of the survey draft to the attendees.</p>
<p>ACTION</p>	<p>Anderson asked why one of the survey questions directs you to skip a question if you answered a certain way and stated that she did not think this was necessary because all of the questions should apply to everyone. Koloski agreed that it was not necessary and she would remove the instruction to skip the question. Ryan asked if they should change solar farm to renewable energy supply in one of the questions but pointed out that people will have different ideas of what constitutes as renewable energy. Koloski asked the group if they would like to remove that question all together. Lynn reminded the group that the purpose of this question is to determine what people want from Huntington public land. Anderson would like to keep the question, but consider changing the language around renewable energy options (i.e. "renewable energy source, such as a solar farm").</p> <p>Lynn and Koloski stressed that the most difficult question is how to ask if town members would like to sell or keep the current Town Forest and that this is the question that most requires group feedback. In the draft the question is presented with a summary statement of the Town Forest issue (the land is not accessible, it is possible to keep the land for conservation purposes only, or sell and buy a more accessible piece of land for conservation and recreation). After the summary the survey asks the town member to select which option best represents their views. The options are presented as statements. At the June meeting the Commission discussed formatting the question with two separate paragraphs, one summarizing the argument to keep the current Town Forest and one summarizing the argument to sell it. The town member would be asked to read both arguments and then indicate which best represented their views. The attendees briefly reviewed both formats and discussed whether to change the draft question or keep it as is. Koloski stated that she would like to keep the question as is. Overall the group thinks both are good options and would like to review them side by side.</p>
<p>ACTION</p>	<p>ACTION: Lynn will provide a draft of the alternate question format for the survey question regarding selling or keeping the Town Forest. Beckwith and Koloski will review first, and then the Commission will review and discuss at the next meeting.</p> <p>Ryan pointed out that there is inconsistency in how they survey refers to the HCC throughout the survey.</p> <p>ACTION: Koloski will edit the survey so that the first reference to the HCC is "Huntington Conservation Commission (HCC)" and the following references are "HCC."</p> <p>Koloski asked the group to discuss the best way to distribute the survey. The Commission had previously discussed distributing the survey electronically and with hard copies. A link to the survey will be shared on Front Porch Forum (FPF) and through Heidi Racht's email distribution list. Hard copies will be available at prominent town locations such as the Town Offices, the library, and Beaudry's store.</p>

<p>ACTION</p>	<p>Lynn proposed that the HCC could provide a prize incentive for completing the survey. By completing the survey town members could be entered into a drawing for prizes and the HCC could use money from the budget to purchase gift certificates to local businesses. Anderson pointed out that they may be able to get local businesses to donate prizes. Anderson would be happy to donate a massage and would also be willing to begin to ask local businesses for donations.</p> <p>The target timeline is to distribute the survey to the public in August, but the group agreed that it would be okay if it needed to be pushed out a little. At the September meeting the commission will finalize the survey, determine a budget for prizes, and/or finalize the ask for donation of prizes. Anderson volunteered to reach out to local businesses about donations in the meantime. Ryan suggested asking Midnight Goat Farm.</p> <p>ACTION: Anderson will begin to reach out to local businesses to request prize donations for the Town Forest survey.</p> <p>Ryan informed the group that there was a Vermont state bill that the Commission should be aware of. A bill passed called Forest Integrity (H.857). It will elevate the importance of maintaining intact forests and wildlife habitat through local and regional planning, create incentives for landowners to donate land for public use, and identify strategies to help landowners plan for the long-term stewardship and ownership of their forests.</p> <p>Storm Water- Paola is absent. Beckwith read Paola's update from the Work Plan document.</p>
<p>Topic: Work Plan – Other Efforts: Promotion:</p>	<p>Work Plan Document- Beckwith summarized the work completed on the HCC Work Plan. It is now available online via Google Drive in an HCC Shared folder, along with the minutes. The folder was shared with all Commission members along with instructions on how to access and edit the document in Google Drive. Anderson stated that she doesn't believe she received the email communications about the Work Plan and asked Beckwith to resend.</p> <p>Beckwith identified the formatting changes she made to the document and asked the group to confirm that the document was for planning and tracking purposes. She said that if the Commission wanted a more robust project management document she could provide the format, but it seemed like the more streamlined format she had presented best fit the Commission's needs. Lynn confirmed that the document should be used as a guiding work plan, but they would like to be able to make comments at the granular, task level. Beckwith suggested that the "next steps" column was intended for this purpose. Lynn said she had not noticed that column and that would work well. It was agreed that Beckwith will invoice the Commission for \$100 for the work completed, as discussed in the previous meeting.</p> <p>Invasives- Ryan informed the group that some roads have still not been mowed for wild parsnip. Pond Road, for example, has a lot of wild parsnip that looks like it's ready to seed. Roman, who is absent, is in charge of coordinating mowing. Smith reached out to Heidi Racht regarding mowing but has not heard back. Lynn suggested that Smith go off of the mowing project and have Roman continue to take the lead. Roman is absent but had said that he would follow up and the group needs to get an update from him. Some mowing did occur but it seems to have stopped. Ryan pointed out that May/June is the ideal time to do the mowing so may be too late for this year. Lynn commented that the state of the roads</p>

<p>ACTION</p>	<p>and mowing in Huntington seems to be much better than in surrounding towns. The group agreed that the main roads look good but secondary roads do not. The task for the Commission will now be to determine how to make sure all the necessary mowing happens on all roads before the 4th of July in 2017.</p> <p>ACTION: Ryan will email Roman and follow up about his duties regarding mowing. If Roman cannot continue to lead this project then Lynn will be the backup.</p> <p>Since the ideal timing to inform the public about wild parsnips this summer has passed the Commission will not put out an article in the Times Ink on the topic this year, but will start doing quarterly articles on other topics in the Fall. The public message for summer 2017 will be to pull wild parsnip if possible.</p> <p>Smith produced a binder she put together on invasives. She went on the Vermont Invasives website and found that they have factsheets. Smith printed the sheets for the invasives already in Vermont. Each sheet has a picture of the plant in the wild and information on how to identify it. Smith also created a table with commonly planted invasives and good alternatives and included this at the end of the binder. Smith would like to make a sturdier version of the binder to be available at the library. The group discussed other places to share the information and suggested having it at the Town Offices as well. Koloski recommended posting on FPF when the binders were available. Koloski offered to design a cover for the binder. Beckwith recommended that a PDF version of the binder be posted on the HCC webpage. Lynn pointed out how Smith creating the binder is a great example of something should be tracked in the Work Plan.</p>
<p>ACTION</p>	<p>ACTION: Koloski will design a cover for the invasives binder. Smith will continue to work on the project and put together at least one other copy.</p> <p>Anderson shared that a contact of hers gave her three names of potential speakers on invasives. The Commission will try to schedule a talk in the winter or spring.</p> <p>Ryan brought up that the Commission had previously met with Bill Menning about emerald ash borer (EAB). Menning is part of a state initiative that cuts down ash trees and runs an educational campaign helping towns develop community preparedness plans. The HCC should discuss this topic and consider forming a subcommittee.</p>
<p>ACTION</p>	<p>Herps brochure- Ryan updated the group that she needs to figure out how much information should be included in the brochure and create a draft of the information before the next meeting. She also was able to find a map of the hotspots of where the amphibians cross.</p> <p>ACTION: Ryan will have a draft of the text for the brochure for the Commission to review in September.</p>
<p>ACTION</p>	<p>Events- Lynn updated the group that the HHCT had not made a decision yet about taking on the Sugar Makers event. She thinks that the email thread with the HHCT has not been effective in communication and the issue has been drawn out by some misinformation.</p>

<p>ACTION</p> <p>ACTION</p> <p>ACTION</p>	<p>ACTION: Lynn will give HHCT a deadline for providing an answer on the Sugar Makers. The HCC will need to know by the September meeting.</p> <p>Lynn brought up the idea of initiating more collaboration with a Huntington town committee, such as the Energy Commission. The group agreed to discuss further at a later date and to generally be aware of opportunities for collaboration.</p> <p>Conservation Fund- Ryan informed the new members of the HCC that she had previously created a grid to use as a tool to evaluate an application to the Conservation Fund. The Selectboard approved this Conservation Fund Review document as a living document (it may be updated as needed). Ryan passed a hard copy of the document around for the attendees to take a look at. Ryan pointed out that the HCC might be receiving grant applications soon and it would be a good idea for everyone to reacquaint themselves with the application review process. Lynn agreed and suggested that the next step should be for the Commission members to review the document so they are prepared to evaluate a new grant application.</p> <p>ACTION: All members will review the Conservation Fund Review document, which Ryan sent via email, and the application process posted on the HCC webpage. The group will do so before the September meeting and members will come to the meeting prepared with questions.</p> <p>ACTION: Ryan will post the Conservation Fund Review document in the Shared folder on Google Drive. Beckwith will format the document so that the 'official' fields cannot be changed but application-specific information can be filled in.</p> <p>Ryan let the new members know that the commission had rewritten the application process in May and the Selectboard then approved it. Koloski asked the group to revisit the question of how to best get work out to the public the Fund, which was discussed briefly at the June meeting. Ryan reminded the group that they had decided to use a column in the Times Ink, a flyer, and a quarterly post on FPF. Koloski volunteered to take on the posts for FPF.</p> <p>ACTION: Koloski will do a summer post on FPF about the HCC. Koloski will post on FPF quarterly for the foreseeable future.</p>
<p>Topic: Other Business</p> <p>ACTION</p>	<p>Budget- Ryan stated that the HCC closed the fiscal year with some money remaining. Lynn commented that they never seem to draw down the workshop or contract lines in the budget. The Commission will want to focus on taking advantage of those categories in the coming year. This FY they will need to draw on the budget for prizes for the Town Forest survey. Smith commented that they could benefit from being more aware of workshops going on.</p> <p>Posting the agenda- Ryan informed the group that she and Lynn, as co-chairs, alternate creating the agenda and facilitating the meeting. Barbara Elliott posts the agenda at the Town Offices and on the website. Ryan requested a volunteer to post the agenda at the library and Beaudry's every month.</p>

	ACTION: Smith will post the agenda at the library and Beaudry's store every month.
Topic: Set next meeting's agenda	No meeting in August, next meeting is September 8th. Lynn requested topics for the next agenda. Agenda topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review the Conservation Fund application review process ● Review the Town Forest survey ● Vote on a budget for prizes for the Town Forest survey ● Emerald ash borer discussion ● Review Work Plan projects ● Review draft of text for amphibian crossing brochure
ACTION	ACTION: Ryan will determine if the HCC can have a standing booking at the library every month or if the meeting needs to move to the Town Offices.
Adjourn MOTION	MOTION: Anderson moved and Smith 2nd to adjourn the meeting at 20:34. Passed unanimously.
	14 July 2016 – HCC monthly meeting at the Huntington Public Library 19 July 2016– Draft/unapproved minutes sent to Town Clerk for website posting 8 September 2016 – Final/approved minutes approved 13 September 2016 – Approved minutes sent to Town Clerk for recording & website posting