

Conservation Commission Final Minutes	October 10, 2023
Town of Hampton Falls	Town Hall

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

- a. Ms. Hill, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:38pm

B. ROLL CALL

- a. **Present:** Mary Ann Hill, Chair, Shawn Hanson, Ann Reis, Robert Wiener, Cathy Golas, Paul Melanson, Karen Ayers, alternate (not a voting member)
- b. **Absent:** Lou Gargiulo, Selectman’s Rep
- c. **Staff:** Brianna O’Brien

C. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Combined Town Conservation Coordinator

- i. Rayann Dionne presented an update for the Commission on SHEA’s Project of Special Merit Grant. SHEA partnered with NHDES Coastal program and applied for a NOAA Project of Special Merit earlier this year and the project was funded. There are two parts to the grant. The first is to identify marsh parcel ownership and seek pathways for municipalities to obtain ownership. This part of the project is to be done in partnership with RPC. The second part is to hire a Coastal Conservation Coordinator. This position would be shared among Hampton, Hampton Falls and Seabrook. This is an 18-month position with about 3-months for onboarding. There will be support from RCCD. The goal would be for this person to add capacity to each of the towns which would include developing conservation land strategies and developing land conservation monitoring protocols. There is also funding for RCCD to do some of the monitoring for the towns to help increase capacity. There is some flexibility in the funding and some money is available for municipalities to tailor the position to what they need, for example grant application support, permit application review, ordinance audits, etc.
- ii. Ms. Hill asked how the boundaries are identified for open space parcels like within the marsh. Ms. Dionne and Mr. Diener responded that generally, it is unknown. Guestimates are made and cross referenced with whatever material exists.
- iii. Ms. Ayers asked how this position’s time would be split between the three towns. It was answered that this would be a part-time position and it would be split evenly between the three towns. It is not a lot of time but it should be enough to get started and demonstrate the importance of this work in this area.
- iv. The Commission was asked to review the position job description that SHEA drafted and provide feedback to Ms. Dionne by the end of the week. Additionally, each Commission has been asked to choose a representative to be part of the interview and candidate evaluation process. The Commission also needs to choose a method for file sharing. The Commission decided on Google Drive. The Commission needs to compile the files and documents that the Coastal Conservation Coordinator should have access to in order to get started with a good foundation on this project. The Commission will also need to identify a primary contact for the Coastal Conservation Coordinator.

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- v. The Commission discussed that most of their documents are hard copies but they do have a Google Drive. This Coastal Conservation Coordinator would need access to the Town Hall in order to access, sort through and organize the existing files.
 - vi. Mr. Hanson emphasized the importance of helping with administrative organization specifically with easement monitoring reports from third party land trusts like SELT.
 - vii. Several members asked about pay and the hours of the position. It is 20 hours a week and pays \$25/ hour and includes vacation time. Ms. Dionne added that CAW has submitted another grant application that has multiple parts and one part of that application is to make this position full-time. If that happens, it would be held under RCCD.
 - viii. Ms. Hill asked how many parcels have unknown ownership. There are hundreds. Seabrook has the most. The reason this is an important piece of this grant project is that DES has an interest in doing salt marsh restoration and they cannot do work on privately owned land or land with unknown ownership so figuring out the ownership and helping towns to obtain ownership will allow DES to move forward with these salt marsh projects.
- b. New Homeowners**
- i. Ms. Hill reviewed the list of property sales for 2023. There were 21 actual sales. The Commission will mail citizen guides to all those properties. They will try to get labels printed if possible. Ms. Golas also offered to hand deliver them. The Commission will organize a plan.
- c. RCCD Parcel Donation:**
- i. RCCD would like to donate 5 marsh parcels to the Town. Ms. Hill e-mailed Tracy Degnan and will talk about it this month.
- d. Monitoring Reports:**
- i. The Commission received monitoring reports by SELT for Neibling and Marsh Lane, and from RCCD for Applecrest and Hurd Farm. There is a tree down crossing a trail at Marsh Lane, the Road Agent or Fire Department needs to remove it, the Town does not want volunteers doing it. There is a tree stand at Neibling, it needs to be removed. The Commission agreed to put a note on it indicating it needs to be removed.

D. OLD BUSINESS

a. Raspberry Farm and Marsh Lane:

- i. The hayfield was mowed and the trees were cut down on October 5th.
- ii. The Commission discussed that hay has not been harvested the past couple of years because of the nesting birds. The Commission needs to decide if the field should be a habitat field for the bird or an agriculture field and should be harvested. Should the Commission pay Mr. Hurd if they are going to ask him to mow and not harvest hay or should they let Steve harvest the hay and ignore the habitat value? Ms.

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Ayers will check with a bird expert to see if there is high quality habitat value or if it is not to decide how to move forward with the mowing. Mr. Hurd should be updated.

- b.** Interns’ activities wrap up:
 - i. They did a great job and their material was well received at the Hampton Seabrook Estuary Collaborative meeting.
- c.** Project for Eagle scout:
 - i. Reis Gandt is going to put an educational kiosk at the Depot Landing. She is looking for information to include at the kiosk. The Commission discussed what kind of information should be included. The idea is that it will explain the history of salt marsh uses and salt marsh ecology.
- d.** Greenhead traps:
 - i. The estimate from Dragon Mosquito from March 2023 was \$1,050 for placement and retrieval and \$170 for a new one. The Town has 50. It’s not known if 50 are actually needed or if all 50 are functioning. The traps collect 30,000 flies per trap if they are installed correctly. Dragon Mosquito does a good job putting them out in the marsh and not just on the side of the road. The Commission is still exploring storage options.
- e.** Vernal pool inventory:
 - i. Ms. Hill talked to the LAS teacher for 8th grade science who used to work for NOAA. Her class can’t do the vernal pool inventory project but maybe the 7th grade teacher could. It wouldn’t need to be done until the spring so there is time to get sorted.
- f.** Conservation Commission logo:
 - i. Ms. O’Brien will finish the options this week and send them out for the Commission to review.

E. COMMUNICATION TO BOARD MEMBERS

- a.** Planning Board: 41 Lafayette- There is a question about compliance with the site plan. There is a stone wall that needs to be capped off and finished. They also had work trucks there that were not supposed to be there, and others parked in the wrong locations on-site.
- b.** ZBA:
 - i. 3 Weare Rd. Applied for a Variance to permit Light Commercial Storage and Vehicle Maintenance Use. It was denied and NHDES has issued a restoration plan.
 - ii. Map 4 Lot 70-2 at 63 Drinkwater Rd (just past the dump on the same side of the road.): Variance from 100’ prime buffer and 50’ property line setback. It currently just has a garage. It is on the October ZBA agenda.
- c.** SHEA: SHEA hosted their photography event on September 13th. 15 people attended. The photo contest has ended and a decision will be made tomorrow night. Mr. Hanson believes the kayak event may have been canceled as no one had signed up as of the night of the photography night but that is unknown. SHEA spent several hours reviewing the

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Estuary Management Plan goals and a number of them were prioritized. The low hanging fruit was identified. One more work session is needed to pare down the goals even more.

- d. Pollinator talk on September 13th hosted by Pollinator Pathways was well attended. Two people from Pollinator Pathways gave a presentation and then Ms. Hill talked about invasives- she had live samples and provided print outs. It was very well received.
- e. Upcoming meetings and webinars:
 - i. The NHACC annual meeting is November 4th in Pembroke- Ms. Hill will send the link to everyone.

F. FINANCIAL

a. Expenditures to vote on:

- i. Girl Scout bill to construct new fly traps: \$1,000 for 10 new traps and \$750 for the placement and retrieval of 50 traps. The total bill is \$1,750.
 - 1. Mr. Hanson motioned to pay the bill for the construction and placement and retrieval of the fly traps in the amount of \$1,750 to the Girl Scout Troop. Ms. Golas seconded. Vote 6-0
- ii. \$2,740.00 to RCCD for spraying herbicide at Raspberry Farm
 - 1. Mr. Hanson motioned to pay the bill for spraying herbicide at Raspberry Farm in the amount of \$2,740. Mr. Weiner seconded. Vote 6-0.
- iii. Fund Bal: \$161,971.15, includes interest. Mr. Hanson asked what the interest rate is. Ms. Hill will look into it.
- iv. Budget Balance: \$3,011.28. All of the Interns were paid out of the Conservation Fund and the budget will be reimbursed.

G. MINUTES

a. September 13, 2023 minutes

- i. The Commission made several edits:
 - 1. Remove Nancy Roka. She is no longer an alternate
 - 2. Robert Wiener's name is spelled wrong on the last line.
 - 3. New business A. 3. The Homeowner's guide is not part of the budget.
 - 4. R. Webb added an edit to section E. a.
 - 5. Ms. Reis seconded SHEA bill.
- ii. Mr. Hanson moved to accept the September 2023 minutes as amended. Mr. Wiener seconded. Vote 6-0

H. ADJOURNMENT

- a. Mr. Hanson motioned to adjourn 7:55pm Mr. Wiener seconded. Vote 6-0