

## **Hampton Conservation Commission**

### **Regular Meeting**

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Town Hall Meeting Room

### **Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 pm.

Members present: Mark Samios, Marc Cardwell, Marcia Kilpatrick, Bruce Spaman, Kevin Grindle

Seating of alternates: None needed.

Audience for Citizens: None.

Approval of the minutes from the Feb meeting. Motion by Ev H, seconded by Marsha K. Approved.

No additions to the agenda.

### **Old Business**

#### **Arbor Day**

Two sugar maples will be planted at the Little River Preserve (LRP). One will be in memory of Randy Thompson, the former Chair of the Conservation Commission. Randy played a key role in acquiring the LRP property. Bruce S. will purchase the trees and a small brass plaque to honor Randy's memory. Funds for the plaque are already in the HCC budget.

#### **LRP buildout**

Kevin G. provided an update on progress on the LRP. He handed out a draft of the informational map intended for the kiosk. The draft met with general approval, and it was agreed to fine tune the locations of specific features on the map. It was noted that the names in the legend are rather anodyne and members were encouraged to come up with better – more interesting – names by next meeting.

Kevin then presented a set of 30% design plans for the buildout of the LRP. This is a critical first step in being able to solicit bids for the actual construction. There was general agreement over the parking lot, the paved access road into the LRP and the boardwalk. There was more discussion concerning the construction and route of the trail that will lead from the parking lot to the first overlook below the Hammond Hill bridge. Kevin plans to inspect that area again to provide us with more detailed options

at the next meeting. The overall reaction was very positive, and Kevin expressed optimism that all the planning documents could be completed in time to get bids out in the Summer and begin construction in the Fall of 2025.

### Budget Request

Mark Samios briefly described his presentation to the Finance Board. He said that there has been no hint of how the Board will vote on our budget. He does not expect to get everything we asked for.

### Vine Trimming at LRP

Marsha K. asked about plans to trim vines in the trees along Hammond Hill Road. Marc C. stated that he hoped to schedule a workday soon. Marc C. agreed he would notify the members of the Commission when a date was set.

### Bird Houses

Marsha K reported she spoke with Scout leader Rich Telford who agreed that building bird houses for the LRP would be a good project for the younger scouts. The goal would be to build 6 blue bird houses. Rich agreed to look for some plans. No timeline was discussed. Mark S. noted that if we install bird houses someone will need to clean them out.

### Bird Blind

There was a lengthy discussion about the construction of a bird blind. Marsha K. has identified a location and met with an individual willing to build a simple blind for \$4500. Ev H. has come up with an alternative plan that would allow for viewing ports on two sides. He believes the price would be somewhat similar. Both options would be built on skids to permit the blind to be moved as necessary. Mark S. raised concerns about the cost and the lack of detail in the plans. Ev H. and Marsha K. agreed to provide more details at the April meeting.

No agreement was reached; however, it was suggested that all members attempt to inspect the site Marsha K has proposed.

### Cohanic Ledges

Mark S. brought up the fact that the owner on the southern side of the town's Cohanic Ledge property is interested in selling. This is the same individual we hope to persuade to give the HCC an easement for a one car off road parking space. Marc C. noted that he had recently visited the Cohanic Ledge property with Penny N. He added that the scale of the challenges to making the Ledges more accessible is pretty

daunting and that half measures will not really make an appreciable difference. The fact the town does not own the ledges or the ground immediately in front of the ledges complicates any effort to make them more accessible. Marc C. concluded by recommending that the HCC either make a major commitment to improving all aspects of the access to the Cohanic Ledges or leave well enough alone, or at the most doing nothing more than improving the parking. He finished by noting that he had a brief conversation with the First Selectman and that Alan C. had opined that the LRP should be the priority for the HCC and that the Cohanic Ledges did not warrant a major investment of time or money.

Mark S. stated that he held similar views and stated we should put the Cohanic Ledges on the back burner. He added that the HCC would really need a grant of some sort to take on a project of this scale. He wondered if one of the tribes might be interested. Marc C. stated that he might be able to make initial contact with a tribal representative.

#### Publications

Mark S. informed the group that, as HCC chairman, he gets a wide variety of publications (some online and some in hard copy). He offered to make a list available so that any member who was interested could sign up to receive the publications of interest.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marc Cardwell, Acting Secretary