

Hampton Conservation Commission

Minutes

September 21, 2022

Meeting was called to order at 6:28 pm.

Stan Crawford as seated as an alternate.

Stan had arranged for Kevin Grindle, the Chair of Hampton Planning and Zoning and an environmental engineer who routinely works with the DEEP to provide background on the DEEP grants for trails.

The official title is the Connecticut Recreation Trail Grant Program. Several million dollars will be available to improve public access to trails. Grants can also be used for related projects (e.g. kiosks, parking). Preference is given to projects that increase connectivity between distinct pieces of public land, but that is not a requirement. Improved ADA access is also a plus, as is improved fire safety. Trails can be open to horses as well as pedestrians.

Funding will be 80 % from the State and 20% from the Town. The Town portion can be in kind (commitment of town workers, town equipment) as well as in actual funds. The application is fairly simple (app. 10 pages) and cost estimates can be rough. No date has been set for accepting applications.

Kevin has already recommended to the Selectmen that Hampton go after some of this money.

Stan noted that Hampton owns a lot of properties and these funds would be very useful. He also noted that Peggy Fox's property was likely to come on the market soon and asked if these grants can be used to buy land. Kevin thought so but was not certain.

There followed a general discussion about how Hampton might use some of these funds. Perhaps install signs and parking spaces at all nine of the existing trails? Print and distribute maps and trail guides? Build an ADA compliant trail to the pond on the Hammond Hill property? At this point Keven excused himself and the HCC continued with the original agenda.

Marcia Kilpatrick raised concerns about whether the HCC adheres to all the rules for meetings and decisions making. This led to a discussion with the consensus being that the HCC was following the relevant rules.

There was broad agreement the HCC booth at the Harvest Festival was a great success and that it generated a lot of interest in the Hammond Hill property. A step-by-step proposal for Phase One of the Hammond Hill Preserve was passed out by the Chair. The First Selectman has offered to provide town workers and equipment for work at Hammond Hill and has requested a detailed plan. It was decided to request a meeting with the First Selectman to solicit his support for the Phase One plan. The Chair will take the lead on the meeting and added that anyone who wanted to attend was welcome.

Marcia reported that this year's effort to eradicate knotweed is pretty much complete. She has asked the Fletcher Library to sponsor a presentation on pollinator pathways. A response is pending.

There was general discussion about Peg Fox's property (between thirty and fifty acres) as well as Tom Gaines property (100 acres). Reportedly, the Gaines property may go to the State of Connecticut. There was agreement that Hampton should at least explore options for purchasing one or both. After a discussion about how to proceed it was agreed that the Chair would raise this issue with the First Selectman.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Submitted by Marc Cardwell for the HCC