

HOPKINTON LAND TRUST
TRUSTEES PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

May 26, 2020

PRESENT: Marilyn Grant, *Chair*, Sarah Windsor, *Vice- Chair*, Carol Baker, *Secretary*, Mary Gibbons, Ed Wood and Cyndy Johnson, *Trustees*. Tom Thompson, *Associate*.

ABSENT: Paul Wilcox, *Trustee*.

Per the Hopkinton Town Council, and due to the COVID-19 virus, this MEETING WAS HELD REMOTELY via Zoom.

- A. Call to order** at 6:34 by Grant with 6 trustees, and therefore a quorum, present.
- B. Approval of previous meeting minutes:** Minutes of April 28, 2020 Public and Executive minutes were reviewed and approved, passed unanimously, including sealing of Executive Minutes.
- C. Accounting of funds:** Citizen's \$28,293; Webster \$665,500.

D. Reports

Chair:

Meeting schedule for summer: June 23, July 25, August 22

URI Trail Camera Survey: Amy Meyer, grad student, requested permission to set trail cameras on some of our properties for the second time. Request was approved. She also shared photos of bobcats on our properties.

Emerald Ash Borer Study - URI: Zack Brown, grad student reported that last years emerald ash borer detection traps at Diamond Hill Swamp and Canonchet Preserve detected no insects, which is good news. They requested permission to set up traps again this year, request was approved.

Subcommittees:

Advocacy-: Subcommittee Status; update on plans before the Planning Board.

Grant reminded us of a discussion with DiOrio several months ago included having ex-officio member from the Land Trust such as is provided for in the Town Charter for Cons Comm. Grant spoke with Cook-Martin, Town Clerk, and it seems getting this for HLT would require change to Charter and since there is no Charter Commission at this point perhaps we should make sure to provide our input in writing and as often as possible by speaking at PB meetings.

Johnson reported there will be a public hearing on June 6 via Zoom regarding a Request for Comprehensive Plan/Zoning Map Amendments – AP 7, Lot 32, AP 10, Lot 87 & AP 11, Lot 35 – Main Street – Atlantic Control Systems Inc.

Friends/HLT:

Trail work schedule: Due to COVID restrictions to group size, trail work is being done by small groups on an as needed basis for now.

Land Management and Stewardship:

Crown Farm Preserve parking – Grant discussed that Buford has indicated that 3 drive gates and locks are needed to control access to private adjoining properties at a cost of \$1,300 for materials with labor donated. Windsor made a motion to approve an expenditure of up to \$1,500 for purchase and installation of gates. Seconded by Gibbons, passed unanimously.

Grant also reported that Sunset Designs contractor continues to clear brush as stipulated

around parking lot.

Depot Square/Brushy Brook Trail update- Wood reported that the DEM said we should expect the permit last week, but he hasn't received it as of yet. Peter Jensen sent a cost estimate of \$93,000 for project, we currently have about \$80,000 left in grant. Friends have expressed interest in raising funds to assist with trail completion. Baker made a motion, seconded by Johnson, to move ahead with the \$93,000 project; motion passed unanimously. Hope to start construction in late September.

Mechanic St. shed, security issues: Wood reported he has ordered several solar motion lights for installation on the shed.

Bradford solar trail, fence damage: Wood reported he received a proposal from Marc Tremblay, on behalf of Mr. Ralph Palumbo of Southern Sky to implement a habitat clearing project involving about 20 acres of the HLT's Grills Preserve II property, located on the south side of a recently established solar array on abutting private property. Mr. Palumbo is offering to cover the costs of the proposal. The recent establishment of a solar array on the adjacent property and the presence of the standing dead trees has resulted in both the increased risk of falling dead trees onto the fencing that is now located along the boundary, and the opportunity to implement a habitat diversity project, namely the potential of providing Pitch Pine habitat conditions, which is identified by the RI Wildlife Action Plan as a habitat condition of Greatest Conservation Need. Wood made a motion to accept this proposal and to forward the proposal to RIDEM for their approval. Motion was seconded by Johnson and passed unanimously

Funding and Grants: Grant reported that during the Town budget approval process, the Town Council approved \$10,000 from Real Estate Transfer Tax FY 20-21 for the HLT.

E. Old Business: N/A

F. New Business:

Approve motion to apply for Open Space Grant

Grant discussed progress of preparing an application for James Property, AP 5 Lots 1 & 2, for the current round of RIDEM Local Open Space 2020 Supplemental Grants Program. The deadline for application is June 5, 2020. This grant program provides up to 50% matching funds to preserve valuable open space throughout the state. Individual grant requests up to \$400,000 will be considered. Grants funds can be used for reimbursement of up to 50% of appraisal, title, and survey costs. Discussion ensued with regards to merits of using these funds to assist in the purchase of this property. Gibbons made a motion to authorize the Land Trust to submit an application for \$400,000 to RIDEM for the 2020 Supplemental Open Space Grant for the James properties, Assessor Plat 5, Lots 1 & 2. The motion was seconded by Windsor; passed unanimously.

G. Public Forum: None

H. Executive Session [pursuant to RI Gen. Law Ch.46 42-46-5a (5)]. At 7:31 PM, Windsor moved that we go into executive session, pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a)(5), to discuss potential land acquisitions. Baker seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Return from Executive Session at 7:58 PM

I. Adjourn 7:58 PM

Respectfully submitted
Carol Baker, Secretary