

HOPKINTON LAND TRUST
TRUSTEES PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
September 22, 2020

PRESENT: Marilyn Grant, *Chair*, Sarah Windsor, *Vice- Chair*, Carol Baker, Secretary, Tom Thompson and Cyndy Johnson, *Trustees*. Harvey Buford, *Hopkinton Conservation Commission*.

ABSENT: Ed Wood, in Memoriam. Mary Gibbons, *Trustees*.

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

A. Call to order at 7:08 by Grant with 5 trustees, and therefore a quorum, present.

B. Approval of previous meeting minutes: Minutes of August 25, 2020 Public and Executive minutes were reviewed and approved, passed unanimously, including sealing of Executive Minutes.

C. Accounting of funds: Citizen's \$24,234; Webster \$665,780

D. Reports

Chair:

W. Edward Wood: One of our own, and one of the original trustees of the Land Trust, suddenly and unexpectedly, passed away this past Tuesday, September 15. We are all in shock. With his vast experience and work ethic, he accomplished so much for environment and land preservation, not only in Hopkinton, but also at the state level. His shoes will be extraordinarily difficult to fill and his legacy will be felt forever.

Meeting schedule: Next regular meeting, October 27. Annual meeting November 10.

Subcommittees:

Advocacy: Status of subcommittee; update on plans before the Planning Board

Town Council hearing Sept 28: Letter re: river property.

Grant and Johnson shared and reviewed letter from the Land Trust to the Town Council on proposed Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment and Zoning Ordinance Amendment to allow for utility scale solar on AP 2 Lot 73, approved at last month's meeting. The Land Trust has been particularly interested in acquiring the Pawcatuck River frontage south of the Right of Way currently in place. This area provides access to the Polly Coon Bridge and would enhance that access and protect the Grills Wildlife Sanctuary and the river. The letter requests the Town Council keep our interest in mind as part of their deliberations. Windsor made a motion, seconded by Baker, to approve revisions and to send the letter to the Town Council. Passed unanimously. Johnson said she will attend the Town Council meeting.

Policy: Use of Bicycles on Land Trust Property: No update.

Friends/HLT: Grant and Anderson continue to develop fundraising plans for raising monies for the additional funds needed to complete the Depot Square trail project, approximately \$23,000.

Land Mgmt and Stewardship:

Crown Farm Preserve update:

Buford reported he spoke with Barry James, who has the agricultural lease on the fields at the Preserve. James has requested permission to clear field edges, which have

become overgrown and also offered to clean up the historical cemetery on the property. All agreed to this proposal. Buford said that James agreed to coordinate work on the cemetery with Richard Prescott from the Hopkinton Historical Society.

Buford also reported that the parking lot trail sign is completed and ready for installation, but it will be a complicated job. A work party will be planned in the future for the installation.

Depot Square/Brushy Brook Trail update: Jensen site visit, Matson easement

Meeting scheduled with Peter Jensen at the site on 9/24 at 9 AM, Grant, Thompson, Buford, Johnson and representative of Hope Valley Fire Department (HVFD) will attend.

Wood and Justin Lee, HVFD chief, had met with Matson in the past, who had agreed to give us an easement. We will reach out to Matson to finalize agreement.

Grills Preserve:

Forestry Management Project: Buford reported he met with the forester, Marc Tremblay, and the forestry project, the cutting of trees, is complete. However, additional work needs to be done. Firewood removal will take several weeks, fallen logs need to be removed from stone walls, and signage needs to be put in place. Additionally, while the trail has been flagged, it has not yet been cut. Tremblay will continue to monitor project.

Invasive removal plan for interior field: Thompson spoke with Gary and Lucas Marsh who are in the second year of a five year lease on this field this fee covers the ball field and fields at the Grills Sanctuary which has many Tree of Life and other invasives taking over the field. They are currently in the second year of a five year lease on this field at \$450 per year (this fee covers the ball field and fields at the Grills Sanctuary also). After discussing several options of renovating the field, including use of a non-selective herbicide on the entire field, the Marshes suggested a different approach which would include physically remove all invasive trees; brush hog the entire field expanding the field to the wood line; aggressively harrow; plow and prepare for hay seeding; and seed. Follow annually with, hopefully, two cuttings of quality hay. As this process would be time consuming and costly, Thompson suggested the Land Trust consider forgiving them the full cost of one year's lease. This would substantially increase the value of the field and ensure that they would be able to manage the field long enough to justify their investment. Windsor made a motion to forgive the next year's lease payment for the Marshes, to be reviewed each year. Motion seconded by Baker, motion passed unanimously. Grant agreed to pen a written proposal to Marshes with this proposal.

Grills Wildlife Sanctuary:

Encroachment issue by Rhodes: Nothing new for the moment.

Kenyon Crossroads: Beaver Flood trail

We are still hoping that Peter Jensen will have a chance to look at this section of trail that to see about putting in helical piles. Back burner to Depot Square project.

Funding and Grants: No report.

E. Old Business: None

F. New Business: None

G. Public Forum: None

H. Executive Session [pursuant to RI Gen. Law Ch.46 42-46-5a (5)]. At 8:00 PM, Johnson moved that we go into executive session, pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a)(5), to discuss potential land acquisitions. Windsor seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Reconvene in Open Session at 8:10 PM

Motion to seal the minutes of Executive Session: Johnson made a motion to seal the Executive Minutes, seconded by Baker. Passed unanimously.

I. Adjourn 8:10 PM

Respectfully submitted
Carol Baker, Secretary