

HOPKINTON LAND TRUST
TRUSTEES PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

January 26, 2021

PRESENT: Marilyn Grant, *Chair*, Sarah Windsor, *Vice-Chair*, Carol Baker, *Secretary*, Mary Gibbons, Tom Thompson and Cyndy Johnson, *Trustees*. Harvey Buford, *Hopkinton Conservation Commission*. Bob Marvel, *Hopkinton Town Council liaison*, Jason Parent, Elaine Caldarone, *public*.

ABSENT: None

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

A. Call to order at 7:03 by Grant with 6 trustees, and therefore a quorum, present.

B. Approval of previous meeting minutes: Minutes of December 15, 2020 and January 12, 2021 Public and Executive minutes were reviewed and approved, passed unanimously, including sealing of Executive Minutes.

C. Accounting of funds: Citizen's \$15,434; Webster \$665,934.

D. Reports

Chair:

Request from Westerly Track and Athletic Club: Grant shared a request from the Westerly Track and Athletic club for permission to hold a trail race on the Grills Preserve (both Westerly and Hopkinton sides) in October. They are an IRS recognized non-profit corporation, the purpose of our trail event is to promote healthy, fun, responsible passive outdoor recreation, while using proceeds to benefit our youth annual scholarship program (open to all Chariho, Westerly, Stonington, and Wheeler high school seniors). All of the staging of the event, including parking, start/finish line, refreshments, and bathrooms, would be held on the Westerly side, for which they have already obtained full advance permission from the Westerly Land Trust. Their only ask of the Hopkinton Land Trust is the permission to use the trails on the Hopkinton side and temporarily mark for navigational purposes. Their markings will consist only of orange construction-type flags and yard sale type direction signs stuck into the ground at major intersections, all of which would be put down the morning of the race and picked up immediately following the race. They will provide us with a 3rd party certificate of liability insurance for \$3 million for the event, plus umbrella up to \$10 million. They also offered to help with any minor trail maintenance. All agreed this was good use of the property, Grant will confirm with Finance department regarding any logistical/insurance concerns.

Meeting schedule: February 23, March 23, April 27.

Trustee Vacancy: Grant, Johnson and Thompson met Jason Parent on Jan 9 at GWS for a walk and he expressed interest in applying. Grant invited him to attend the meeting, and we all exchanged introductions with each other.

Subcommittees:

Advocacy: Update on plans before the Planning Board, next meeting February 3, nothing noteworthy on the agenda in terms of Land Trust issues. Ongoing projects include:

- Comolli Solar Project: Johnson reported she has not yet heard back from Comolli's lawyer, but understands they would like to deal directly with us regarding our suggestions.

- Fairview Plan: Johnson reported she spoke with developer Catelli who agreed with 3 out of the 4 points we made in our letter, except for installation of the gate as he would like to do it himself.

Policy: Property vandalism response:

Thompson shared with us a draft Town ordinance that he and Gibbons have developed to deal with recreational vehicle damage to Land Trust properties. Other types of vandalism are covered under other Town ordinances. He based much of this on other ordinances adopted by other entities, including the Gloucester Land Trust. His next step is sharing this document with Police Chief, Bob Marvel and Town solicitor to review challenges and benefits that this type of ordinance might present. All agreed that this was the next step and Marvel agreed to be involved with this review.

Friends/HLT: Update on Fundraising for Brush Brook Trail:

Mailing went out to about 100 folks, to support additional monies needed for Depot Square project, to supplement/match Ed Wood's donation. Chris Anderson from the Friends told Grant they have currently raised over \$6,000 of \$10,000 goal.

Land Mgmt and Stewardship:

Depot Square/Brushy Brook Trail update:

Grant reported she has asked Jensen to develop a budget for the Depot Sq/BB Trail realignment due to erosion. He mentioned that he owes us verbiage for signs that should be posted at/on the trail. Anderson, CJ Doyle and are working on the Preliminary Determination Application for a wetland permit for the new section of trail. Grant also suggested we open the Access Trail (main trail) this spring. We will need to install construction fencing, will require a work party. All agreed.

Grills Preserve: Status agricultural field project

Thompson reported that he was unaware that work had begun based on the Memorandum of Agreement we have with our leasee Marsh for invasive plant removal and field improvement. Tom will reach out to Lucas Marsh to ascertain status of project.

Grills Wildlife Sanctuary: Encroachment issue Rhodes / Ashaway Rd

Rhodes encroachment still a problem, expanded backyard into our property. We will revisit in the spring.

Kenyon Crossroads: Beaver Flood trail

Beaver Flood Trail grant application was submitted on 1/26 to RIDEM for \$58,000. This was prepared by Harvey and finalized by Grant and Anderson and signed by Town Council President.

Funding and Grants: See Kenyon Crossroads above.

E. Old Business: Annual reorganization

Grant willing to be chair for another year with dedicated weekly support by Land Trust Board members.

- Johnson made a motion, seconded by Baker for Grant to be Chair for calendar year 2021, passed unanimously. Grant agreed.

- Gibbons made a motion, seconded by Johnson for Windsor to be Vice Chair for calendar year 2021, passed unanimously. Windsor agreed.
- Windsor made a motion, seconded by Gibbons for Baker to be Secretary for calendar year 2021, passed unanimously. Baker agreed.

F. New Business: Award contract for surveying services

Grant reported on efforts to find a surveyor to complete a Class 1 survey for the James property. We received a bid of \$33,560 from Crossman Engineering, who has a MOU with the town for engineering services. This is higher than the competitive bid we received from Garofalo of \$31,060 back in October. We can get a 50% reimbursement of this cost as part of the Open Space Grant. Windsor made a motion to accept the proposal from Garofalo for \$31,060, but not before we have an agreed upon purchase price with the James family. Seconded by Baker, passed unanimously.

G. Public Forum: Elaine Caldarone asked about whether we had programs regarding building bird and bat houses for wildlife use. She is involved with Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA), and they are interested in hosting similar programs. Windsor said that the Friends group had organized these programs several years ago, a DEM staff person gave the presentations, and suggested that Caldarone contact Chris Anderson for the DEM contact name.

H. Executive Session [pursuant to RI Gen. Law Ch.46 42-46-5a (5)]. At 8:06 PM, Baker moved that we go into executive session, pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a)(5), to discuss potential land acquisitions, and to allow Buford and Parent to attend. Windsor seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Reconvene in Open Session at 8:32 PM

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

I. Adjourn 8:33 PM

Respectfully submitted
Carol Baker, Secretary