

Hampton Conservation Commission  
Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, November 20, 2024, 6:30 PM  
Town Hall Meeting Room

**Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Chair Mark Samios. Members present: Bruce Spaman, Marsha Kilpatrick, Marc Cardwell. Absent: Kevin Grindle and Penny Newbury. Attendees from the community: John Tillinghast, Selectman and Michelle Mlyniec, representing the Scouts.

Little River Preserve – update on mowing. Marc Cardwell updated the Commission on the Status of the mowing contract. Wayne Henri is done for this year but is interested in doing the mowing again next season – probably starting in April. Regular mowing makes the Preserve look more inviting and well cared for.

**Little River** Preserve – Eagle Scout project boardwalk. Eagle Scout candidate Jonah Mlyniec has presented a plan for a 62 foot boardwalk providing dry foot access to the first dam on the Little River. A site inspection was held earlier in the month (First Selectman Allan Cahill, Commission Chair Mark Samios, and Commission member Marc Cardwell attending) and the planned boardwalk was marked with stakes. Jonah has been in contact with the Wetlands officer who is supportive of the project but was unable to attend the site inspection. The First Selectman offered to provide heavy equipment to place the support pilings (4x4 pressure treated lumber).

Jonah was unable to attend the meeting because of a play rehearsal that ran late. His Mother, Scout leader Michelle Mlyniec, provided an update on the projected cost of supplies and Jonah's plans for soliciting donations or discounts from local lumber yards, including Chase, Eastford and Willards. The total price without any discount is estimated at \$1800. The discussion that followed revolved around uncertainty of how much of a discount he will be able to obtain and therefore how much the Conservation Commission should provide. It was pointed out that the project needs to be completed by April 2025 and that the window for outdoor work is closing. Consensus developed that the Commission should give Jonah \$900 now to allow him to purchase and install the pilings/supports and then see how much more – if any - is still needed at the next meeting. **Motion Made** (Marc/Marsha) to provide Johan with \$900.

**Approved.**

Little River Preserve – Engineering Contract Status. In response to a question, John Tillinghast stated that he was not aware of any update on the status of the Contract to allow Kevin Grindle and his company to perform the engineering work to finalize plans for the upgrades to the Little River Preserve. Marc Cardwell expressed concern about whether the contract will be ready for approval at the December Selectman meeting (scheduled for 2 Dec). Mark Samios expressed concern that there would not be time for the Conservation Commission to review the contract language prior to the Selectman meeting. This led to a general discussion where members expressed their appreciation for all the expertise and hours Kevin had already donated to the

preserve. That said, there was also a general sense that schedule slippage beyond December could negatively impact the goal of formally opening the Preserve during the 2025 Harvest Festival. Chair Samios stated that he would contact Kevin directly for an update and, if appropriate, call a special meeting to allow the Commission to review the text prior to a vote by the Selectmen. John Tillinghast offered to speak to the First Selectman about the Commission's concerns about schedule slippage.

**Commission Budget.** Chair Samios raised the issue of the 2025 Budget. In addition to regular mowing he asked if we needed to have Keith Crawford use his heavy machinery to cut back the edges of the field. There was general support for continuing to maintain the edges of the open spaces. The Chair asked about signage for the Little River Preserve. A general discussion followed with the consensus being that we should wait for the final site plan before getting too specific about signs.

**Cohantic Ledges.** There was a discussion about the need to improve the trail and provide signage for the Cohantic ledges. The trail would require chainsaws and related equipment – not work suitable for a volunteer workday. There seemed to be general support, however, no final decision was made.

**Junk Car Project.** Chair Samios updated the Commission on his research about finding scrap metal buyers for the many junk cars in Hampton. There are multiple companies that will pay \$100 and up for junk cars and they do all the work of removing the car. Mark's original thought was that the Conservation Commission would publicize this option, assist residents in scheduling the removal and then share the proceeds with the resident. Publicity would highlight the environmental risk posed by junk vehicles and the many toxic chemicals they contain) to the local Hampton watershed. Several issues have been identified: One, would residents actually want to get rid of their junk vehicles? Two, can the Conservation Commission receive money? Three, questions of liability. This led to a general discussion of the subject but no real consensus on how to move forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45.