

Conservation Commission Minutes Wednesday, October 25, 2023

7PM, 2nd Floor of the Town Offices and via Zoom

Members: Corey Fitch, Chair; Jody Schubert, Co-Chair; Reyer Jaarsma, Glenn Griffin, Linda Leone

Alt. Members: Julie Foote, Robin Kilfeather-Mackey, Bob Taylor, Rickey Poor

BOS: John Hammond

Absent: Cindy Heath

1. 7:00pm Call To Order/Corey. Corey called the meeting to order at 7pm.
2. Hooper Property Update - Craig Privett (Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT), by zoom) ([Documents under discussion](#)). Corey introduced Craig, on behalf of UVLT. Craig outlined two projects owned by Mark Hooper: Hooper North and Hooper South. Mark has also completed the center area Map 1, Lot 21 which is a reserved house site where the historic family home is located.

UVLT is asking for assistance with costs of the remaining easements (Mark covered the cost of the first): UVLT asks for \$11,500 from CCC, Mark will contribute about \$12,000 and UVLT will cover the rest. CCC can select where its contribution is directed: either to the UVLT Stewardship Fund to support/enforce regulations on the easement property or against project expenses (accreditation requirements like attorneys' fees and other due diligence work, drafting or review of easements, baseline documentation report (bdr), etc.). Ordinarily, UVLT holds the conservation interests outright, without an executory interest, however, there would be terms that if something happened to UVLT the responsibilities would be conveyed to a similar, appropriate organization. Some municipalities like holding easements directly, others find that burdensome; this would be part of the Commission's vote at the public hearing. The CCC also agreed that it has no interest in having a primary or secondary interest in the easement, however, it will support UVLT in monitoring the property at UVLT's request. The CCC agreed to have its contribution placed against project expenses.

Discussion focused on which wildlife corridor this easement would enhance since it is not contiguous either to the Yatsevitch land to its east or the Shurcliff lands to its northwest. Craig agreed that it is an indirect relationship and that he would remove the reference to the wildlife corridor. For the public hearing, Craig will update his slides, including a better *Conserved Lands in Cornish* map showing ownership of other non-conserved lands and UVLT's conserved lands on the Vermont side of the Connecticut River. Craig read a letter Mark Hooper wrote to the CCC; Craig will forward the letter to us. Craig would like to close the conservation project before the end of December 2023.

CCC will consider a site visit prior to the November 13 public hearing where a final vote will be taken on the \$11,500 contribution to UVLT, its disposition toward project expenses fund, and CCC's disinterest in being a primary or secondary interest holder in the easement.

3. NRI Map Update - Austin Ford, Associate Planner (UVLSRPC, by zoom). ([Revised Map Project Scope 10-15-23](#)) At 7:30pm, Corey introduced Austin Ford with UVLSRPC, who works with Olivia and will be doing our NRI maps. The revised proposal cost is \$4,470; the CCC agreed to round this figure up to \$5000 when it votes on the funding. Austin reviewed the revisions he made in response to CCC requests to:
 - **TASK 1. Update NRI Maps** - A revision of 2023 NRI maps with direction from the CCC. This task includes existing data updates and changes to layout. This task does not include the manipulation or creation of new datasets. All maps will be updated using a consistent layout for visual consistency. Maps will be provided as posters that can be reduced in size for

printing on either 8.5x11 or 11x17. This task also includes any summaries of map data into metrics needed for the NRI report's text or tables. These metrics will be provided on request for CCC integration.

- **TASK 2. Cultural and Historic Resources Map** – A revision of the 2013 Cultural Resources map with direction from the CCC. This task includes existing data updates, the manipulation of existing datasets, and the addition of the following proposed new layers or features. The budget does not include the creation of new data layers as those are included in Task 4. This task also includes any summaries of map data into metrics needed for the NRI report's text or tables. These metrics will be provided on request for CCC integration.
 - **TASK 3. Co-occurrence Map** – The 2013 Co-occurrence map will be updated using existing GIS data from the 2013 NRI. This task will not include new analysis, addition of features, or manipulation of datasets. Instead, UVLSRPC will update the layout, non-co occurrence data layers, and style to equal the other NRI maps.
 - **TASK 4. Other New Maps and Tailored Data Layers** – Additional maps to those listed in the previous tasks can be provided at an additional cost, estimated at 3 hours per map. Tailored data layers may also be added to any map. These layers typically take 1-3 hours to finish, and total time is flexible depending on the request. The estimated budget includes any correspondence, edits, and potential virtual meetings that may be needed. The CCC will prioritize the new maps and data layers requested. UVLSRPC Staff will then inform the CCC of options to achieve the most priorities within the budget provided.
4. Public Hearing November 13, 2023 6 pm: Corey noted that both Craig and Austin are available to attend as needed and the agenda will include:
- Request for approval for funding the map project proposed by UVLSRPC for up to \$5000
 - Request for funding the Hooper easement contribution to UVLT at \$11,500; that these monies be applied to project costs,
 - Request that the Town of Cornish and the CCC would hold neither primary or secondary interest in the Hooper easement.
5. Approve the [Draft Minutes 9-27-23](#). Glenn motioned that the minutes be approved as distributed; Jody seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.
6. Treasurer's Report (Robin). Robin referred to her [Treasurer Reporting Spreadsheet \(Tab Q3 2023\)](#) and gave the following report:

For the nine months ended September 30, 2023, the CCC's restricted funds totalled \$196k and have earned \$7,252 of interest income. Expenditures during Q3 included expense reimbursements related to the spring wetlands and CES events totalling \$226 drawn from the Palmer Fund. In addition, there were material receipts going into the Conservation Fund during Q3 that included proceeds from the annual 2022 Land Use Change tax and 2023 Appropriation totaling \$6,750, and the Snowden memorial gifts of \$565. Robin also reported that she has received a year-to-date spending report from the town associated with the CCC Operating Account. The budget for this account is \$750 for the year and spending to date of \$406 for our 2023 NHACC annual membership and other various expenses has left a remaining balance of \$344.

The Commission then discussed various upcoming potential expenditures and what impact they may have on outstanding available funds. If successful at the town public hearing the CCC will hold in the upcoming weeks, two draws against the Conservation Fund for the potential Hooper Easement (\$11,500) and NRI mapping work (\$5,000) required to complete the NRI update would bring the fund balance down to \$156k.

Lastly, although the Commission has received the 2024 annual dues notice from NHACC, payment of that invoice will be tabled until Jan-Feb of 2024.

7. Subcommittee Reports: [Subcommittee](#)
 - Land Conservation Plan – no report.
 - Town Water Protection Plan – no report.
 - Education Plan
 - i. Update on Susie Spikol Cornish Lower School event Friday, October 13- Jody. Jody said the event has been rescheduled to spring 2024.
 - Land Monitoring
 - i. White Swan Walk October 16, 2023/Jody. Jody reported that Julie, Linda and she had a good walk with no issues noted on the land.
 - ii. Shurcliff Walk October 22, 2023/Linda. Linda noted that Rickey, Robin, Julie and she walked from Charlie Shurcliff's house to the easement and around the Woods Trail. There were no encroachments or issues. She noted that the exceptionally rainy season had not caused flooding, significant erosion, or downed trees.
 - iii. Meyette Monitoring Date/Reyer. Reyer said Brian asked if we would be walking his property this year since we did it last year, indicating that he would prefer every other year instead of annually. CCC is the sole easement owner, and the Committee felt it important that the land be monitored every year. Reyer will coordinate a date to monitor the land before year-end.
8. NRI Update: [Master Draft NRI 8-23-2023](#). Jody said that she would reach out to Bill Lipfert to alert the Planning Board that CCC plans to include the zoning maps in this edition of the updated NRI. No other report except the maps discussion relevant to UVLT's proposal.
9. CCC Website/Linda. Linda will reach out to Jenny Lipfert to post the September minutes and the Cole event summary.
10. Other Business
 - Cole Property Celebration Event follow up/Jody. [Robin's Summary of Cole Easement Celebration. \(Cole Easement Celebration FOLDER with PHOTOS\)](#). Jody noted that the event was very well attended (38 people including other easement owners, townspeople, neighbors, children), good weather, good talk by Brian Hotz and an excellent address by Jerri Cole, good walk along part of the land.
 - CCC swag - Linda. Hats. [Some hat samples](#). Linda showed the group a few hat samples and the red ATM hat of Julie's was chosen. Linda will follow with Corey to get a logo and pursue an order. It was agreed that this doesn't have to happen in 2023.
 - Tree planting at Fairgrounds follow up/Bob. No report.
 - [NHACC Annual Meeting](#). No update.
 - Annual Agenda Items for October/Corey. Tabled to the November meeting.
 - i. Start Town Meeting Display Discussion/Decide on Topic
 - ii. Begin Draft of Town Report Page
 - iii. Review and Approval of Warrant article for contribution to the Conservation Fund and Prepare Annual Budget: [Draft Warrant Article Request for CCC 2024 Funding](#)
 - iv. Conservation Notes update
 - v. Finalize CCC award choice and plan gift
 - Reimbursements requested: Glenn moved and Julie seconded approval of these two reimbursements, and the Commission agreed unanimously.
 - i. Linda \$60.00 NHACC Annual Meeting (Palmer Fund)
 - ii. Jody \$51.08 for Cole Event refreshments (Operating Fund)

- Agenda Items for the Next Meeting: Kate Buchman will attend from the Connecticut River Conservancy and discuss the dam relicensing processing.
- 11. The next regular meeting will be held on November 29, 2023, 7 pm at the Town Offices. (A “Map Meeting” will be held on November 13 immediately following the public hearing with the sole agenda item being the NRI map proposal.)
- 12. Adjournment