

DRAFT

North Hampton Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes – January 9, 2024

Administrative: The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. via Channel 22 from the Town Hall. The agenda was posted in Compliance with RSA 91-A requirements.

Roll Call: Members present: Lisa Wilson, (Chair), Kathy Grant (Co-Chair), Dave Ciccalone, Audrey Prior and Andrew Vorkink. Members of the public: Peter Steckler, Grace McCullach, newly appointed member Jay Chabot and alternate member Jennifer Kotzen. Lisa Wilson noted that two newly appointed members present, although not yet sworn-in, may join the meeting as non-voting members.

Approval of December 12, 2023 Draft Minutes: After review of the December 12, 2023 minutes, ***a motion was made by Kathy Grant, duly seconded by Audrey Prior to accept the minutes as written.*** The motion carried.

New Business:

Philbrick Pond Saltmarsh Restoration Project: Peter Steckler, *Principal, Northeast Conservation Services*, gave a slide presentation about the nature of the past and future projects aimed at restoring the Philbrick Pond Saltmarsh. Peter discussed the markers showing how the achieved objectives of Phase I work to improve marsh drainage, the growth of marsh vegetation, and that salt marsh sparrows were observed in the marsh habitat. Peter discussed Phase II plans for ditch remediation to restore the marsh and Phase III plans to design a pilot program to eradicate phragmites. Peter also discussed the history of the 38 acres saltmarsh and how tidal restrictions were the outcome of past farming practices by creating berms leaving excessive standing water on the marsh platform, which resulted in large expanses of unvegetated marsh. Grace Culloch, *UNH Master's Program*, discussed her work during the summer of 2023 to monitor the saltmarsh sparrow at Philbrick Pond. The saltmarsh sparrow is found in saltmarshes along the Atlantic coast of the United States and is of high conservation concern due its habitat loss. Sea level rise and flooding contribute to nest mortality and their populations have been steadily declining 9% per in recent decades. Grace and Peter answered questions, and following the necessary permitting, the timeframe to complete the project is from 2024 to 2026.

Peter explained that this project is the outcome of planning over many years and he thanked the many project partners, the Conservation Commission, and town for its strong support. Funds from the America the Beautiful Challenge grant will allow the next two phases of the project to be completed.

Old Business

Conservation Easement Subcommittee Update: Amanda Ellms, *SELT Easement Stewardship Manager*, thanked the Commission for the letter sent to SELT noting that the Commission has no objections to the manure storage facility at the Gov. Dale Farm pointing out that the town, as the executory interest holder in the property, is required to make a final determination.

Trail Maintenance Update: Nothing to report.

Conservation Signage: Nothing to report.

Other Business: None

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Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A:3, II(d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community. Lisa Wilson called a Roll Call vote and the motion carried.

The public meeting adjourned to enter in non-public session at 8:04 p.m.

A Roll Call vote was taken by Lisa Wilson.

Non-Public Session Members present: Members present: Lisa Wilson, (Chair), Kathy Grant (Vice Chair), Dave Ciccalone, Audrey Prior, Andrew Vorkink, Jay Chabot, Jennifer Kotzen, and Beverly Moore, Recording Secretary.

A motion was made by Lisa Wilson, duly seconded by Andrew Vorkink, to leave the Non-Public Session at 9:00 p.m. Lisa Wilson called a Roll Call Vote and the motion carried.

Public Session reconvened at 9:11 p.m. **A motion was made by Lisa Wilson, duly seconded by Audrey Prior, to seal the minutes.**

Lisa Wilson called a Roll Call vote.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Moore

Recording Secretary

“These minutes were prepared within five (5) business days as required by NH RSA 91-A:2, II. They will not be finalized until approved by the majority vote by the Commission”.