

Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes
Cape Elizabeth Town Hall
7:00 p.m., Wednesday, February 8, 2023

Present: Corinne Ketcham, Chair, Michelle Boyer, Matt Craig, Emily Helliesen Day, Stacey Dietsch, Bruce Moore, Richard Sullivan.

Staff: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner

1. Call to Order. Chair Ketcham called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Chair Ketcham welcomed new member Michelle Boyer.
2. Public Comment. No members of the public wished to speak on items not on the agenda.
3. Minutes. Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Ms. Day, to approved the January 10, 2023 minutes and the motion passed 7-0.
4. Planning Board review. No submissions were received for the February Planning Board meeting.
5. Greenbelt Implementation/Management. Chair Ketcham took an open space event request out of order.

Ice Rink event. Kate Brandeis, representing the Cape Community Arena Group, is seeking event approval for an end of the season celebration at the ice rink located at Gull Crest on March 3rd from 5-8 pm. The event will be similar to what typically happens on Friday night, but will add some music and 1-2 food trucks. She anticipates the same traffic that currently occurs and expects less than 150 attendees at any one time.

Mr. Moore asked if the event will include a police officer. Ms. Brandeis said that a police officer usually swings by during the public skate on Saturday and Sunday night, and we can add Friday night for this event.

Chair Ketcham asked about food truck permits. Ms. O'Meara confirmed that new food truck regulations have been adopted that include a permit, however, the proposed food trucks falls under an "accessory use" to the town's operation of Gull Crest as a recreation area, so a permit is not required.

Ms. Day asked about adequate parking because people are parking on the access drive. Ms. O'Meara suggested that if police officers identify a problem, it can be addressed. There was a suggestion that one side of the access drive be posted no parking. It was confirmed that the estimated number of attendees at one time for the event will be less than 150.

Chair Ketcham made a motion to approve the event as proposed, seconded by Mr. Craig and the motion passed 7-0.

6. FOAA Training. Ms. O'Meara explained that annual FOAA training is mandated by state law for some boards, not including the Conservation Committee. It is still town policy that all committees operate in compliance with FOAA, so she will review highlights of the FOAA materials provided to the committee. All business of the committee should be conducted at meetings where the public is given notice, usually through an agenda and posting on the town website. Any two members meeting should include public notice, which can be easily provided by notifying staff. Committee members should keep in mind that any communication, including emails and texts, are subject to a FOAA request. Committee members were encouraged to contact staff if questions come up.
7. Priority Setting report. The committee reviewed the draft report, which has been formatted with interested volunteers as the target audience. Mr. Moore questioned the boardwalk graphic, and it was confirmed that boards are typically 10' long. Committee members accepted the report and Ms. Dietsch asked how it would be shared? Ms. O'Meara will provide it to folks who have already inquired about projects. It will be mentioned in the Gazette. Mr. Moore would like it forwarded to any USM or UNE Environmental/Hiking clubs.

Ms. O'Meara reported that the chain saw and impact drill equipment purchases requested last month are in process. The committee discussed the potential purchase of a circular saw, and decided that was not necessary. Ms. Day noted that the chainsaw was used for angles. Safety equipment should also be purchased. Ms. Day asked if we need volunteers to sign a waiver when using the tools to build boardwalks? MS. O'Meara will follow-up.

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Ms. Day, to approve the priorities report and the motion passed 7-0.

Ms. Dietsch asked about any other instruction provided to volunteers? Prior to starting a project, volunteers meet with the committee to obtain permission and a member also meets them onsite.

The committee asked about the FY 2024 budget and process. Ms. O'Meara said a request for \$20,000 in funding submitted for FY 2024. The Town Council will hold budget review workshops and she will provide the date the Greenbelt account will be discussed.

8. Easement monitoring. Ardath Dixon, CELT Stewardship manager reviewed the annual report for the Town Farm and Cross Hill. It was noted that the Town Farm report

includes areas outside the CELT easement. Mr. Craig commented that the monitoring reports were well done.

Ms. Dixon shared that prior to the most recent monitoring visits, CELT send postcards to open space abutters notifying them that the monitoring visits would be occurring. The report shows that some of the abutters who agreed to remove encroachments have done so, a few have not and a few new encroachments have occurred. She found both property pins for 12 Steeplebush and updated the committee on 23 Tiger Lily Ln.

Mr. Moore asked if the Town can remove an encroachment? Yes.

Ms. Dietsch asked about mowing at Elizabeth Farms. Ms. Dixon said CELT has an easement there and it does not prohibit mowing. CELT would like mowing to be done only seasonally to protect bird habitat.

The committee discussed the effort last year when staff and CELT met with abutters who may have encroached on open space. For this year, staff was instructed to send letters regarding encroachments.

Ms. O'Meara then talked about monitoring town owned easements, referencing mapgeo to show locations. Committee members agreed to each visit a property and complete a monitoring report. She will send report forms as follows:

Bryco Great Pond easement – Mr. Sullivan
Hobstone – Mr. Sullivan
Karu easement (Ocean House Rd) – Chair Ketcham
Leighton easement – Mr. Craig
Richardson easement – Ms. Boyer
Spurwink Marsh easement – Mr. Moore
St. Barts easement – Mr. Sullivan
Wildwood – Ms. Dietsch

Mr. Craig asked about the proposed solar farm at the Recycling Center. Ms. O'Meara provided an update, noting that the farm will be fenced and that a 10' wide area outside the fence is proposed to preserve connectivity of greenbelt trails.

9. Next meeting

Due to staff availability, the committee agreed to move the next meeting to March 8th. Following a motion to adjourn made by Chair Ketcham, seconded by Mr. Sullivan, and passed 7-0, the meeting adjourned at 9:01 pm.