

**Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes
Cape Elizabeth Town Hall
7:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 13, 2024**

Present: Corinne Ketcham, Acting Chair, Michelle Boyer, Matt Craig, Emily Helliesen Day, Stacey Dietsch,.

Staff: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner

1. Call to Order. Acting Chair Ketcham called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.
2. Public Comment. No member of the public wished to speak.
3. Minutes. The minutes of the January 9, 2024 meeting were approved 4-0.
4. Budget. Committee members noted that the FY 2025 budget review by the Town Council will likely include the greenbelt trails account on March 21st, beginning at 6:00 p.m.
5. Greenbelt Management.

Cross Hill monitoring. The committee reviewed the draft letter that will be sent to Cross Hill property owners abutting open space where encroachments have been identified by CELT. Ardath Dixon, Stewardship Manager, joined the committee in editing the letter. The revised draft letter was approved, subject to Chair Craig, who will sign it. Committee members noted the number of properties encroaching has declined from 40 to 31.

Mr. Craig arrived.

Winnick Woods parking/erosion. The committee reviewed the cost estimate by L.P. Murray (\$4,100) to regrade the Winnick Woods parking lot and install water bars at the trail entrance. The committee was pleased with the cost and recommended approval (5-0).

Nordic Loop trail. Chair Craig reviewed the site visit conducted January 18th with Conservation Committee members, Nordic trail representatives, the town tree warden and town planner. The visit focused on 2 sites on the Nordic trail. At the boardwalk, committee members discussed the existing 30" wide boardwalk covered with snow and existing wet conditions. The consensus at the site walk was for an additional 30" wide boardwalk to be built parallel to the existing boardwalk to create a 60" wide surface that would be adequate for Nordic skiing and grooming. Lumber is stockpiled at the site which can be used for the second boardwalk and Jay Weiss offered to build the boardwalk.

The second site has the root ball of a fallen tree nearly blocking the trail. Tree Warden Jeff Tarling will work to get the root ball removed and Nordic will trim vegetation to widen the area around the root ball. It was also confirmed at the site walk that trimming of existing vegetation in reasonable proximity to the trail, often invasives, to preserve the trail width is maintenance and does not require additional approvals.

Chair Craig recommended that future trail work on the Nordic Trail must make Nordic skiing the primary use. The committee agreed to this by consensus.

MCC Team. The committee was pleased that the MCC Team will be scheduled for 2024 and will be making improvements at Winnick Woods. Bruce Moore and Emily Day volunteered to be CC liaisons with the MCC Team. The committee will review the work proposed prior to the team's arrival.

Parking restrictions. The committee asked for an update on the work by the Ordinance Committee to restrict on-street parking on Dyer Pond Rd adjacent to greenbelt trails. Chair Craig attended the January 29th Ordinance Committee meeting and spoke about the potential impact on greenbelt trail access throughout town. The committee will continue to monitor this issue.

Sawyer Street/Road removal project. Ms. O'Meara shared the presentation made at the February 7th joint Cape Elizabeth/Scarborough Town Council workshop for the Sawyer Street/Road removal project funded by a 1.59 million grant from the Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program (MNRCP).

Gazette. The next gazette should include Cross Hill easement monitoring, and seasonal muddy trails.

6. Planning Board. No items related to the committee.
7. Next meeting. The next meeting will be held March 12th. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.