

Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes
7:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 9, 2021

As a result of the COVID-19 virus, the Conservation Committee conducted the meeting via Zoom remote access as provided by Maine law. Zoom allowed all Conservation Committee members and members of the public to hear all discussion and votes, which were taken by roll call, as required by law.

Present: Mitch Wacksman, Chair, Matt Craig, Emily Helliesen Day, Christophe-Heijn De Vries, Corinne Ketcham, Bruce Moore.

Staff: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner

1. Public Comment.

Daisy Wilson, 18 State Ave - She lives in Queen Acres and would like permission to tap trees on Queen Acres Park for maple syrup as an educational project for neighborhood children and home consumption. This will not be for commercial use.

Ms. Ketcham asked if anyone has made this request before and Ms. O'Meara said no. Ms. Ketcham is protective of maple trees.

Chair Wacksman asked how many trees would be tapped? Mrs. Wilson said 3 trees and 4 taps (one tree is large).

Ms. Day likes the neighborhood project aspect.

Michele Pezzuti-Morse, 10 Beverly Terrace - She has one tree in the road right-of-way and wants this as a project for her 6 year old.

Mr. Moore suggested this should be subject to the Tree Warden's approval.

Mr. Tasse supports 3 trees in the park.

Mr. Craig shared that he has seen 15-20 deer hunting stands on town property attached to trees and we should be consistent.

The Conservation Committee voted 7-0 to grant permission for 3 maple trees in Queen Acres Park to be tapped for maple syrup for educational and home consumption, subject to the approval of the Tree Warden.

2. Minutes. The minutes of the February 9, 2021 were approved 7-0.
3. Budget. The committee discussed current funds, expected funding, and how to queue up trail improvement projects and permitting. The consensus going forward is to set aside funds for construction of the Town Farm Trail boardwalks (estimated cost \$6,400) and state and federal permitting is in process. Chair Wacksman will represent the Town at the April 6, 2021 Planning Board workshop to start the process for obtaining local permitting.

Next, the committee will fund permitting efforts for the bulk of the remaining high priority projects, at Gull Crest, Stonegate and Cross Hill/Winnick Woods.

The Conservation Committee voted 7-0 to recommend contracting with Sebago Technics Inc in the amount of \$8,000 to submit state and federal permitting for boardwalk projects on Gull Crest, Stonegate, and Cross Hill/Winnick Woods.

Chair Wacksman emphasized the need to get all permitting and then potentially get some community support for construction costs and help with construction. We should make sure that we get all the permitting needed for each property, not just the high priority projects.

The committee confirmed that boardwalk will not need railings (with exceptions for projects like the Pollack Brook bridge). The committee agreed that boardwalk extensions would be at the same width as the existing boardwalk, but no less than 30". If there is no boardwalk, then the standard is 30" wide.

4. Greenbelt Implementation.

Coyote hunt. Ms. O'Meara explained that CELT will be putting up signs notifying trail users near Great Pond about the coyote hunt and offered to install signage on town trails as well. Ms. Ketcham asked how long the hunt will continue? The notification said until it is complete. Chair Wacksman noted that CELT signs are in place beyond the canoe racks, but walkers from Golden Ridge should have the benefit of signage at the boardwalk.

Mr. Moore asked about the weapon caliber and Ms. O'Meara does not have that information. The committee noted that coyotes are preying on chicken, turkeys and anything left outside.

Mr. DeVries asked if there is any intention of leaving the farm fields to hunt? There are piles staked out in the field corners.

The Conservation Committee voted 7-0 to accept CELT's offer to install signage regarding ongoing coyote hunting.

Chronology Post project. Philip Mathieu, CELT, introduced Zofia Leary-Forrey, who is a junior at Cape Elizabeth High School and doing an environmental climate project. She would like to install, at four locations, a 4 x 4 post with a concrete base and plastic frame on top so that citizens can take a picture with their smart phone and post it. This will be used to create a record of ecosystem changes. Post locations are (1) Town Farm @ Spurwink River, (2) Robinson Woods @ Pond Cove, (3) Gull Crest, and (4) Willow Brook. She is requesting permission for the town property sites (1, 3).

Mr. Tasse has used chronolog posts elsewhere and the photos provide a cool perspective. He suggests at Pond Cove locating along the shoreline near the trailhead.

Mr. Craig complimented Ms. Leary-Forrey's presentation. He hopes the post at Willow Brook will be angled to capture the salt marsh. Mr. Mathieu said he will partner with her to optimize locations. Grant funding is being pursued for the project.

Chair Wacksman asked how long photos would be collected and the initial collection is for 3 years. Mr. Mathieu said that the project will be reassessed for benefits at that time and potentially continued. Mr. Craig asked about the Willow Brook culvert project and recommended positioning the post so that it is not disrupted by the project.

The Conservation Committee voted 7-0 to approve installation of project posts on town property.

Seasonal Trail closure. Chair Wacksman reported that he and Mr. DeVries had done some trail spot checks today. Conditions are dry, muddy, and icy, all within 50'. When we close the trails, 80% of users respect that and 20% do not. With the pandemic, we did not close trails last year and this year's conditions are the same so it will be no worse.

Mr. Moore noted that at Winnick Woods, there was trail widening at muddy spots, but by the end of summer there was no harm done.

Chair Wacksman suggested that the Gazette include an advisory to avoid muddy trails and that there be no formal trail closure.

Mr. Tasse agreed and noted that if conditions change, the chair can still recommend action. There was consensus not to close trails.

Dyer Pond Trail trespass. Mr. Moore suggested that on trails within 100' of a home, dogs should be on leash.

Mr. Tasse supports on leash until past the property at Dyer Pond.

Ms. Ketcham asked how many other trails will be signed on leash only?

Chair Wacksman said we are trying to enforce the rules. Mr. Tasse described the process as we wait for a series of complaints, then take with further action.

Mr. Craig favors highlighting the issue in the Gazette or signing only Dyer Pond Rd and not highlighting Dyer Pond Rd in the Gazette. The committee agreed to include in the Gazette a general reminder to keep dogs under control.

The Conservation Committee voted 7-0 to install localized signage at the head of Dyer Pond Rd along the private property boundary that it is a leashed dogs only area.

Great Pond Boat Racks. Ms. O'Meara reported that a record 150+ applications were received for the 32 boat rack slots and the permits have been issued. The committee asked her to contact the Sprague Corporation again and ask for permission to install a third rack.

Other. Mr. Tasse noted that LD 806 has been submitted to the legislature which would clarify that paper streets can be accepted for trails.

5. Planning Board. No items on the Planning Board meeting agenda require Conservation Committee review. Chair Wacksman asked about the town center affordable housing project that would front on the village green. Ms. O'Meara provided an overview of the project, and process.

6. Next meeting. The next meeting will be held on April 13th and include an update on permitting. Ms. O'Meara will send Chair Wacksman the background budget information in preparation for his attendance at the March 15th Town Council budget workshop.
7. Public Comment.

Madelene Cyr - She is following up on the ecigarette email and would like the committee to consider adding a no tobacco use policy to the Management Plan. The Portland Public Health Department will help with the language.

Chair Wacksman said the committee will consider it when the committee next updates the management plan. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.