

Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes
Cape Elizabeth Town Hall
7:00 p.m., Tuesday, June 10, 2025

Present: Emily Helliesen Day, Acting Chair, Matthew Grymak, Bruce Moore, Mitch Wacksman.

Staff: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner

1. Call to Order. Acting Chair Day called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. Citizen Comments.

CELT Stewardship Manager Ardath Dixon introduced CELT Summer Stewardship Assistant Mariposa Beane.

3. Minutes. Mr. Wacksman made a motion to approve the May 13, 2025 minutes, seconded by Mr. Moore and the minutes were approved 4-0.

4. Greenbelt implementation/management projects

Cross Hill Boardwalk. Acting Chair Day summarized the site walk held at Cross Hill on May 29th at 4:30 p.m., which Chris Cyr was able to attend, as well as resident Tom Brady. She noted good progress on the machine built trail, as well as the need to follow-up with some boardwalk needs.

Mr. Wacksman said site 1-99 needs a 75' long boardwalk/bridge. He has done some due diligence on the practices in other towns to obtain permitting, such as Cumberland, Falmouth and Gorham. They are not getting permitting and instead treating these as temporary structures without a foundation. We are wasting time pushing paper and should make a different interpretation. This is a public safety hazard.

Ms. O'Meara confirmed that we have been obtaining permitting for many years, and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) would not issue the town permits if we did not need them. She reviewed that we have existing permitting for a 22' long structure at 1-99. The committee agreed to ask Chris to build a 22' long structure for now.

Committee members reaffirmed their decision to seek additional permitting through the Sebago Technic Inc. contract.

Mr. Wacksman noted that the water level on May 14th was higher and wider than he had seen before. Is the Jordan Farm manipulating the water level at the pond used for irrigation? We may need to plan a boardwalk that accommodates that. Staff were directed to inquire with the Jordan Farm.

Mr. Wacksman noted that Chris Cyr had suggested building a boardwalk wide enough for adaptive trail use. We need wider bridges, especially when connecting to CELT's Davis parcel. Acting Chair Day suggested seeking permitting for 42" wide structures. The committee confirmed seeking a boardwalk to be constructed by Chris Cyr at site 1-99 at 42" wide by 22' long.

The committee agreed to seek new permitting for a minimum 42" wide.

Acting Chair Day made a motion to spend up to \$2,000 to build a 22' x 42" wide boardwalk at 1-99, Cross Hill, which was seconded by Mr. Wacksman and the motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Day shared a comment she received that the trails are amazing.

Winnick Woods Invasives

Mr. Moore reported on the site visit held on May 15th at 5:30 p.m. at Winnick Woods to scope out an invasives removal project. Mr. Grymak, Andrea Southworth, and Tree Warden Jeff Tarling also attended. He mentioned a company called Vegetation Control Services, which has done work in Falmouth and Fort Williams Park. The site was marked with blue ribbons for "keep." Referencing Jeff Tarling's email, the suggestion is to do a project at the parking lot and then other sections. We estimate hiring for 2-3 days with an expected cost of \$1,000/day.

Jay Cox has also emailed about invasives, specifically an acre of barberry between the trail and the brook, at the white diamond trail. We can get a crew to cut it off then a tractor to pull the roots. Ticks lay eggs with the barberry.

We should also educate the public about the project with signage as a "Restoration project." Andrea offered to help with education, perhaps leading a group tour in the fall. She may also get a crew to help.

Mr. Grymak summarized that it was an interesting site visit.

Acting Chair Day asked about the best time to do the work and Mr. Moore said sooner is better before things go to seed.

The committee discussed funding. Mr. Moore said that \$4,000 would get us down the trail to the meadow which we mow. That would be the \$2,000 donation and \$2,000 from the CC.

Mr. Wacksman made a motion to fund \$2,000 of invasive management at Winnick Woods, matching the \$2,000 donation for \$4,000 total, the motion was seconded by Mr. Moore, and the motion approved 4-0.

Outer Loop Trail, Gull Crest

Ms. O'Meara summarized the project status with a surveyor able to perform the work for \$4,250, which was paused to allow the committee to reconsider the work. She displayed mapgeo to illustrate the limitations in relying on this data to determine the location of property lines and that moving the trail upland, which is an excellent strategy for the long-term viability of the trail, should include town property boundary verification.

Mr. Wacksman objected to the cost and prefers to move the trail and ask for forgiveness if it is moved onto private property unintentionally.

The committee generally agreed the current condition of the boardwalk needs to be addressed. Moving the trail will significantly reduce/potentially eliminate the need for boardwalks.

After discussion about the need to pay for survey work and impact on abutting private property owners, Mr. Moore made a motion to authorize the boundary survey and add this relocation to the STI permitting, seconded by Mr. Grymak and the motion passed 3-1 (Wacksman).

Eastman trail drainage

Ms. O'Meara updated the committee that drainage is impacting 2 sections of the Eastman Meadows Trail. She visited the site with Public Works Director Jay Reynolds, who will make the needed upgrades, and cost of materials will be paid by the greenbelt account, estimated at less than \$1,000.

Maine Pops Concert

Mr. Wacksman made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to approve the Maine Pops Concert event by a vote of 4-0.

Other

Ardath Dixon, CELT Stewardship Manager, reported that CELT is acquiring 30 acres of open space adjacent to the Davis parcel, and that will include some parking.

5. Planning Board Review. No item to review.
6. Next meeting. The committee typically takes a month off during the summer. Given expected future submissions to the Planning Board, the committee decided to cancel the July meeting and meet again August 12, 2025. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.