

Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes
Cape Elizabeth Town Hall
7:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 12 , 2023

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

Staff: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner

1. Call to Order. Chair Ketcham called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Public Comment. No member of the public wished to speak.
3. Minutes. Mr. Moore made a motion to approve the November 14, 2023 minutes, seconded by Mr. Craig, and the motion passed 5-0.

4. Climate Change resolution request.

Virginia Weiss and Tom Mikulka, from Third Act Maine, requested support from the Conservation Committee for a Resolution to endorse the Fossil Fuel Non-proliferation Treaty Initiative. Ms. Weiss is a Cape graduate and Mr. Mikulka is a Cape resident. Ms. Weiss made a presentation supporting a clean future, the UN Treaty endorses reduction in fossil fuels.

Mr. Moore disclosed that he is a member of Third Act Maine and the Citizen Climate Lobby, and should he abstain? There was no motion for him to abstain.

Ms. Boyer asked the commitment is if we sign? Mr. Mikulka said this only raises consciousness that there is an existential threat and we should cut back on use of fossil fuels. He listed communities such as Portland and Belfast, that have signed on, and communities that are considering an endorsement.

Mr. Craig suggested, on the second page of the resolution, that it should specify state and federal government.

Chair Ketcham made a motion in favor of the resolution with the addition of national and state government, which was seconded by Ms. Boyer, and approved 5-0.

5. Greenbelt Management.

Machine Built Trails. The committee reviewed the draft contract proposal provided by Chris Cyr of Sanctuary Trails to perform machine built trail work on a trail loop in Cross

Hill. The committee reviewed the map and agreed to include the Tiger Lily west connector trail and to not include the Tiger Lily east connector trail.

Ms. Boyer noted the citizen comment received and agreed the reference to use by a 5-year old was confusing.

Ms. Day expanded on the reference. Trails have different levels of skill required and she avoids this trail because it is not fun. Lots of people don't go there because of the technical ability needed. When the first machine built trail was installed at Winnick Woods, people loved that trail.

The committee agreed that a range of trail experiences are currently available on the greenbelt.

The committee asked about the status of the CMP review. Ms. O'Meara said it is still in process and that pictures and other information have been sent to CMP.

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Ms. Ketcham, to recommend the town enter into an agreement with Mr. Cyr to perform the machine built trail work at Cross Hill.

Budget. Ms. O'Meara introduced that the committee will be asked to make a recommendation for funding at the January meeting, so this information has been provided in advance. The committee reviewed the current balance, proposed expenditures through 2024 at this time, and possible additional needs. The committee noted that tree work on town open space is about \$10,000 annually.

Spurwink Bridge and boardwalk. Mr. Craig noted that some debris remains. Ms. O'Meara said it is on the Public Works Department to do list.

Winnick Woods. Mr. Moore noted that stormwater is eroding the parking lot at the Winnick Woods kiosk and the parking lot can be hard to access when icy. Ms. O'Meara will check with the town's stormwater consultant for advice and ask Public Works about sanding.

Town Farm Trail. Ms. Boyer shared photos of a portion of the town farm trail that is very muddy and should be addressed. The committee scheduled a site visit for Friday, December 15th at 8:00 a.m. to assess options. Ms. O'Meara was asked to check if there is any wood left over from other projects, specifically 4 x 4s.

Greenbelt map. Ms. O'Meara circulated a sample updated map upon which the new Cross Hill/Winnick Woods maps will be based. Ms. Day suggested the trail # on the map be deleted and Mr. Craig suggested the font size on the legend be increased. Ms. O'Meara will prepare the new maps for installation.

Volunteer inquiry. The committee received an inquiry from a volunteer who was directed to attend the committee meeting with his proposal. Ms. Day noted that some volunteers do not want to attend a meeting. The committee agreed that when a volunteer inquiry is received, a committee member can meet the volunteer onsite to determine if the work proposed is minor and can be approved or should be before the committee. This process will be documented in the meeting minutes.

Gazette. The updated greenbelt map will be featured. The map should also be sent to the Cape Courier. Ms. Day suggested the annual reminder to courteously use the groomed Nordic trails.

Falmouth trails maintenance. Ms. Day reported that she spoke to Caleb, who is employed by the Town of Falmouth to maintain trails. Falmouth also allocates \$120,000 annually to the Falmouth Land Trust to manage trail stewardship and a portion of this subsidizes the Executive Director salary.

6. Planning Board review. No items are on the Planning Board agenda that require committee review.
7. Next meeting. The next meeting will be held on January 9th and include election of officers, budget, Planning Board review, and easement monitoring (CELT report). The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.