



# TOWN OF CAPE ELIZABETH

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MATTHEW E. STURGIS  
*Town Manager*

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May 28, 2021

James H. Huebener, Planning Board Chair  
320 Ocean House Rd  
P.O. Box 6260  
Cape Elizabeth, Maine 04107

Re: Town Farm Trail boardwalk

Dear Mr. Huebener:

The Town of Cape Elizabeth is requesting a Resource Protection Permit to install 1,100 sq. ft. of boardwalk on 5 existing segments of the Town Farm Trail, located on the Town Farm on Spurwink Ave. The application was deemed complete by the Planning Board at the May 18, 2021 meeting and the Town hopes to receive approval at the June 15th meeting, so that work may commence in July.

## Project Description

The project is construction of 30" wide boardwalk (3 - 10" wide boards), elevated on 4"x4"x4' long skids. Boardwalk is proposed on 5 locations, which are documented in the FB Environmental Trail Assessment conducted by the Town of Cape Elizabeth Conservation Committee during the summer, 2020. The project also requires a Natural Resource Protection Act Permit which has been submitted to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

## Resource Protection Permit Standards

Below is a summary of how the project complies with the Resource Protection Permit Standards (Sec. 19-8-3(B)).

1. The boardwalks will not obstruct the flow of surface or subsurface water. The boardwalks are elevated off the ground on 4" sleepers, which will be installed parallel with the sheet flow of water toward the Sawyer Marsh.

2. The boardwalks will not impound surface waters because they are elevated. The application includes 2' contour topographic information and no topographic changes are proposed. The boardwalks will not measurably reduce the absorptive capacity due to their limited surface area. It is the town's experience that installation of boardwalk will allow adjacent areas to revegetate. In fact, boardwalks installed in these locations soon require vegetation trimming to preserve passage over the width of the boardwalk.
3. The boardwalks will not increase surface water flows. The minimal footprint of the boardwalks (30" across) reduce the human impact on the area from the current condition, where the trail width increases as pedestrians walk on the dry edge. As vegetation recovers, surface flows will lessen as vegetation absorbs the surface water.
4. The boardwalks will not damage spawning grounds or habitat. A portion of the trail is located on land restricted by an easement held by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Comments from the Rachel Carson Wildlife Refuge support the boardwalk installation. As the trail edges revegetate, more cover will be available for wildlife and increase the vegetative buffer for the marsh.
5. The proposed boardwalks are designed to support trail users on a wetland surface. This design has been widely used on town greenbelt trails.
6. The boardwalks will not be detrimental to aquifer recharge or groundwater. The relatively small footprint of the boardwalks, especially in relation to the expanse of naturally vegetated protected open space, will not measurably impact groundwater recharge.
7. There are no coastal dunes on the Town Farm property.
8. The boardwalks will promote ecological and aesthetic values by preserving public access and appreciation of natural areas and also minimizing the human footprint on a 30" wide surface.
9. The boardwalks are proposed on existing trails. No existing vegetated buffer will be removed. Once the boardwalks are in place, muddy areas adjacent to the boardwalks will revegetate and expand the buffer.
10. No vegetation will be removed as part of boardwalk installation and muddy areas will revegetate, which is consistent with best management practices of the Environmental Quality Handbook Erosion and Sediment Control.
11. No discharge of wastewater is proposed as part of boardwalk installation.

12. No boardwalk is proposed within the 100' year floodplain.

Conclusion

At the May 11, 2021 meeting, the Conservation Committee approved two of the boardwalks for construction by Eagle Scout candidates. Following receipt of local and state permits, the Town hopes to begin construction this summer. A representative will be available at the Planning Board meeting to answer questions. Thank you for considering the application and for your work on the Planning Board.

Sincerely,



Matthew E. Sturgis  
Town Manager