

Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes
7:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 14, 2020

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 hear votes, which were taken by roll call, as required by law.

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

Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner

1. Mr. Tasse called the meeting to order and the minutes of the March 10, 2020 meeting were approved 7-0.
2. Trails CIP Assessment. Amanda Gavin, FB Environmental, reviewed the trail data collection form with the committee. Also attending from FB Environmental were Forest Bell and Maggie Kelly.

Mr. Moore asked if the form will capture current use of the trail and Ms. Gavin said it would. Mr. Tasse asked for examples of what would be characterized as "lightly used." Ms. Gavin said she would base the assessment on her observation, presence of erosion and also her knowledge from recreating. Mr. Tasse asked if the form was created for Cape and Ms. Gavin said yes.

The committee discussed how to capture use. Mr. Wacksman suggested using STRAVA data, and Mr. Tasse noted that data only captures 20% of users.

Mr. Wacksman likes the form, but questioned the trail use level assessment. Trail improvements will be done when needed, not just on high use trails. Ms. Gavin can remove that, and thought it would be useful when the committee has to establish priorities. Mr. Wacksman confirmed that the assessment would include boardwalks and locations where boardwalks may be needed. Ms. Gavin said a form would be completed for each boardwalk and each location that may need a boardwalk.

Ms. Day likes the trail use level feature. It will be helpful for prioritizing and she would leave the form as is.

The committee wondered about the number of forms to be completed overall. A form will be created for each boardwalk structure and each trail location that may need improvements. Ms. Gavin confirmed that each form would also include a GPS point and photos.

The committee discussed the safety hazard category on the form. This section would capture when boards are missing, rot, too narrow, handrail needed, etc. Mr. Wacksman noted that improvements are limited by funding. The committee agreed to replace safety hazard with "condition assessment." Handrails will not be listed, but can be identified when there is a gap of 50" or more from the ground.

The committee discussed wetland delineation. Members noted the trails were beaten up this spring. Right now conditions are wet, which may overrepresent poor trail conditions. Mr. De Vries asked how the trail surface is stabilized and the typical response is to add a boardwalk. Ms. O'Meara noted that the results of the assessment will be a 5+ year improvement program.

The committee discussed boardwalk standards. Ms. Gavin confirmed that they will collect dimensions of the boardwalks. Ms. Day wants to look at gaps between boards when they are wide enough to catch a bike wheel. It was agreed that gaps that exceed 1" wide will be noted. The standard width for boardwalks was suggested at 30".

Mr. Craig asked if the assessment will include parking areas or property boundaries? They were not originally included and the committee agreed parking would not be included in this assessment. The assessment should help get master level permits to allow improvements already identified, such as at Tiger Lily Ln. Boundaries are also not included. Mr. Craig expressed concern with the condition of the parking area on the Town Farm.

Mr. Craig asked about the option to reroute trails. Ms. Gavin said that can be included in the notes. Dimensions on recommended new or extended boardwalks will also be included.

Mr. Wacksman asked if an existing trail needs improvement next to a wetland. Do we need to remove the trail? No, we seek a permit to make improvements.

The committee discussed with Ms. Gavin the extent of wetland mapping to be done. Ms. O'Meara referenced an email where she said the extent of

the wetland mapping would be dependent on the recommended trail improvements and the type of wetland adjacent to the trail. Ms. Gavin said her team spoke with DEP in South Portland. They will map wetland and stream 75' from new or additional boardwalk. They will map 250 sf in the area of a vernal pool. The committee agreed they should use their best judgment.

The committee agreed Ms. O'Meara will confirm that the changes to the data form are made and FB will then begin the assessment.

3. Seasonal trail closure. Mr. Tasse reported his observations that the trails were wet but not "insane." He appreciated a report sent by Chris Tullman, CELT. He acknowledged the trails will need more repair work this spring.

Mr. Wacksman confirmed that we need to keep the trails open to provide the public opportunities for outdoor recreation during the pandemic. The committee agreed. It was noted that keeping the trails open can also be an experiment to see how resilient trail surfaces are.

Ms. Day said that CELT has posted signs encouraging social distancing and should the town do that on our trails? Mr. Tasse said that if the public does not understand that now, signs will not help. The committee consensus was not to add signage.

Ms. Day noted that the parking at Winnick Woods is out of control and the Police Department has posted no parking along Sawyer Rd. Mr. Moore suggested adding curb stops to the parking lot. Visitors are pulling onto the grass and creating ruts around the sign. The committee agreed to add curbing along the edge of the parking lot. Ms. O'Meara will coordinate that with the Public Works Department. The committee discussed closing the parking lot to discourage driving to open spaces and decrease the density of use, also to add signage, but decided to support the Police Department's restrictions on parking on the road.

Mr. Craig expressed concern that access to some trails has been curtailed because the school campus is closed. Committee members discussed closing parking areas, but not access by pedestrians and bicycles. The committee acknowledged that they have no stewardship over the school campus, but thanked Mr. Craig for the information provided.

4. Two Lights Trail eagle scout project. This project is on hold for now, but staff has been in contact with John Gray.

Mr. Wacksman asked if the hemlock boards had been delivered to Public Works for Gull Crest boardwalk repairs? Staff will confirm.

5. State Easement Monitoring. The committee reviewed reports completed to date.

Ms. Ketcham reviewed her visit to the Karu easement.

Mr. De Vries reviewed his visit to the Richardson easement. He observed trash near the road, including old blinds and bottles. Trees have been uprooted and a watercourse rerouted. He also visited the Great Pond Condo easement, which is in overall good condition and includes some boardwalk.

Mr. Wacksman concurred , and noted there is a new trail someone cut from Fenway Rd to the pond. The culver across the trail just beyond the boat racks needs some work/replacement in the next 2-3 years. Staff will ask Public Works if they can do this work. He also noted that the trail at Golden Ridge is under water and forces you off the trail. The culvert has popped out and should be addressed.

Mr. Craig reported that the Town Farm Trail at Spurwink Marsh is very wet. The committee noted the challenge of adding boardwalk in this area adjacent to a salt water marsh and that additional erosion control mix was to be added and this work was not done last winter. He also observed storage of yard waste.

6. Other trail work. Mr. Wacksman asked about the connection on Ledgewood Lane to Pilot Point Rd. The committee directed staff to contact the property owners to pursue a license to preserve the existing trail as the adjacent lot may be developed. This an important and well used connector.

Ms. Day asked about boardwalk repairs in Stonegate from Dyer Pond Rd. In-kind replacement can be done. These repairs should be picked up with the Trail assessment.

Mr. Tasse reported that new trails have been raked out at Dyer Woods. The work has not been authorized and he thinks it is kids. Changes to the landscape are minor and he will monitor for now. The committee agreed to monitor for now.

Mr. Tasse reported that a mountain biker has offered to provide some trail stability at Canterbury with 2 25' sections of new boardwalk. Ms. O'Meara said that a permit would likely be required and we would need to reach out to the Canterbury on the Cape board as well. Mr. Tasse was reluctant to turn down an offer of help, but the Trails assessment was intended to pursue master permits rather than one permit at a time. The committee agreed to wait until the Trails assessment is done.

7. Planning Board. There were no items on the Planning Board agenda for the committee to review.
8. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.