

Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes
7:00 p.m., Tuesday, June 8, 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: Matt Craig, Emily Helliesen Day, Christophe-Heijn De Vries, Corinne Ketcham, Bruce Moore.

Staff: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner

1. Selection of Acting Chair. The committee, by consensus, agreed that Corinne Ketcham will serve as Acting Chair of the meeting.

2. Public Comment.

No one asked to be recognized.

3. Minutes.

The minutes of May 11, 2021 were approved 4-0-1(abstention).

4. Greenbelt Management

Cross Hill Open Space little library. Andie Mahoney, 1 Autumn Tides Lane, is representing a request to install a "free little library" on a post on the Cross Hill green, with 3 options for a location shown on a picture submitted.

Mr. Craig asked why this is in front of the Conservation Committee? Ms. O'Meara said the Cross Hill green is town-owned open space and alterations to town open space require committee review.

Ms. Ketcham asked if the neighbors across from the proposed location have an opinion. Ms. Mahoney said the library is closer to the Richards, who support the installation. Ms. Ketcham has seen several of these all over and considers it a nice resource, and supports mounting on a post and not a tree.

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Craig, to approve a little library to be installed on a post and the motion passed 5-0.

Blueberry Ridge invasives management. David Dancause, 5 Fernwood Lane, wants permission to remove invasive plants growing on the border area on town open space. He has provided plans depicting a 100' x 10' area for which he performed a plant survey last fall. The opportunity for early intervention to remove the invasive plants is now and the inventory should be expanded to include the entire open space border. Most plants can be removed manually and some may require herbicides. Invasive plants include sampling Norway maple, autumn olive, and bittersweet. Fort Williams is finding multiflora rose, Japanese

barberry, which is not bad yet here. Mr. Dancause has a good relationship with Joe [Frustaci] and can use his space to help with disposal. He recommends that the invasive management process be defined, communication completed, disposal arranged and then others trained who can help.

Mr. DeVries asked if there are existing invasive management programs managed by the committee? Ms. O'Meara said there are only casual efforts if residents have volunteered to take it on. The committee will need to consider granting permission for this work on town property. She also recommends that the open space property boundary should be marked physically in the field to prevent private property encroachments.

Mr. Dancause added that some trails have problematic trees, such as lost leaders and leaning. The trails should be evaluated and problematic trees identified.

Mr. Dancause said invasives management is needed to be a good steward. He has completed a certification program (CMBG) which included Ted Elman, from the New England Wildflower Society, retired and Amanda Devine, who is taking over and a Botany professor. He also referenced the Midcoast Maine Land Trust, and the Invasive Plant Academy which inventories invasive plants. His email includes the email link for annual grant funding.

Ms. Ketcham said she is a neighbor and agrees there is a need for invasives removal. Has the town arborist been contacted regarding trees on the property line? Mr. Dancause said he had spoken with Mike Duddy, but not recently.

Ms. Ketcham asked if he had talked with other neighbors? Mr. Dancause has spoken with the Barkers only and did not want to get ahead of the Town, which the committee appreciated.

Ms. Ketcham asked about using stakes to mark the property line, rather than something permanent. Ms. O'Meara agreed temporary marking would work to allow native vegetation to reestablish rather than the incremental expansion of private lawns into public open space. Mr. Dancause said the newer subdivisions see pioneer species in sandy soils.

Mr. Ketcham asked Mr. Dancause if he would do the removal? He said the first step is to define a process and notify the neighbors.

Mr. Moore asked if he would mark the vegetation to be removed and Mr. Dancause said that less than 90% of vegetation would be removed. He will return with a process for the committee to review [next month?] and the committee expressed consensus support.

Town Farm Eagle Scout. Jake Goodwin provided an update on the boardwalks he will construct on the Town Farm trail. His proposal is done and he has his letter of approval. His next step is to plan the construction and revise the materials list. He confirmed that he needs to complete the project by August 20th. He will submit a materials list for committee approval at the July meeting.

Trail Permitting

Ms. Ketcham agreed to represent the Conservation Committee at the June 15th Planning Board meeting when the Town Farm Trail Resource Protection Permit application will be considered. Ms. O'Meara will check on the status of the DEP permit.

Rotary Speaker

Mr. Moore agreed to represent the Conservation Committee at a future Rotary meeting to review the greenbelt.

Gazette

The committee discussed topics for inclusion in the next Greenbelt Gazette. Topics include:

- Fowler Rd Connector
- Volunteers needed for projects
- Missing bench
- Town willingness to discuss trail expansion/licenses
- Thanks to Chris Thompson/ email with trail needs

Great Pond

Mr. DeVries noted that some canoes may not be stored on the rack at Great Pond. Ms. O'Meara will visit the site.

The committee asked about the status of the coyote hunt. Ms. O'Meara will inquire.

Ms. Ketcham noted signage changes needed on Stone Drive (sign relocations) and Fernwood (sign needed).

5. Tax acquired property U1-77

Finance Director John Quartararo, in accordance with town policy, has forwarded to the Conservation Committee review of a 0.12 acre property located on Cliff Ave. The committee discussed the ledge/wooded lot and reviewed a map showing the lot in proximity to town owned open space.

A motion was made by Ms. Ketcham seconded by Mr. Moore that the lot is not valuable to the greenbelt and that any sale proceeds be added to the Land Acquisition Fund. The motion passed 5-0.

6. Planning Board review

The committee reviewed the Town Farm Trail Resource Protection application, which was initiated by the committee as part of the town-wide greenbelt trails improvements.

A motion was made by Mr. Moore, seconded by Mr. Craig, to recommend that the Planning Board issue the Resource Protection Permit, which passed 5-0.

7. Next meeting

Ms. O'Meara shared that it was likely that the July meeting would be held in person, subject to pandemic rules. The committee had no objection. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.