

Conservation Commission Minutes

March 13, 2012

Present: Garvan Donegan, Richard Bauman, John Marchewka, John Planinsek, Mitch Wacksman, Marti Blair, Town Planner Maureen O'Meara

Guests: Francesca Governali, Peter Hatem, Andrew Hollyday, David Wing, Nick Piscopo, Tom Piscopo, Matthew Reale-Hatem

Meeting called to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. Citizen Comments – Eagle Scout project. Nick Piscopo of South Portland is interested in doing trail work as an Eagle Scout project. He has experience clearing trails in northern Maine. The project is supposed to be 120 hours, and he can bring in other scouts to help. He will present the project to his Troop Leader and they will decide whether to approve it. Nick's father, Tom, stated that they have already worked on signage at the Fort Williams playground. There will be supervision through the troop and leader.

It was suggested that a place to start would be replacing the broken boardwalk on the Highland Trail, near the Two Lights Road, by the pond. The bridge near the pond is wobbly and needs shoring up. There would be a safety issue if the boardwalk broke.

The Commission would have some money to fund materials.

Nick and Tom will go take a look at the location and get back to us. He needs to come up with a materials list and get us a budget, which the Commission will then need to approve.

2. Citizen Comments – Cape Elizabeth Outing Club would like to hold a fund-raising event on Saturday April 28 at Gull Crest. Francesca Governali passed out proposals. They would like to hold an Adventure Race, which would be a scavenger hunt. The major use will be on the trails in the area, and a staging area on the parking lot. Other groups who have done something similar successfully are Teens to Trails and the Yarmouth Outing Club. Teams would use map and compass and do orienteering as a race. Fees and donations would be solicited.

The Club is not affiliated with the school, so there is no school advisor. Parents are advisors. They plan to draft a liability release for participants, and to look into event insurance. Maureen advised that the town is not generally liable.

It was asked whether there would be adults available with medical training in an official capacity. Francesca Governali said that her mother is a doctor and is one of the advisors.

The Commission has no authority over the athletic fields at Gull Crest.

Motion: To approve the request of the Cape Elizabeth Outing Club to hold an Adventure Race at Gull Crest trails on Saturday, April 28, 2012. The Club will get back to Maureen with details on insurance, releases, and set-up.

Passed 6-0

3. Citizen Comments – David Wing maintains the cross country ski trails for Cape Nordic Club. He and Mike Miller drive the snowmobile to groom the trails. There are areas that are overgrown with brambles and also areas where the signage is very confusing. Those trails went in around an existing Greenbelt trail.

There are some pre-existing snowmobile trails in there and some signage indicates that the trails are shared use.

It would be nice to put a map in the gazebo at the trailhead of the Nordic trails. Muzzy Barton probably has the key to the gazebo.

When we don't have a lot of snow, Mike puts tracks in the field. People walk their dogs on those, which is not good for the cross-country skiing. He suggested a separate dog walking trail.

We have already talked about creating a separate trail for horseback riding.

Cross country skiing is a school-sanctioned sport, but this trail was created as the responsibility of the Nordic club. It is on town property.

The Commission will conduct a monthly trail walk to visit this property at 8:30 on Saturday, March 31. Meet at the gazebo. David Wing would be happy to join us.

4. Minutes of January 24, 2012 were reviewed and unanimously approved.

5. Workplan for 2012. We have \$6500 through June 30. Starting July 1 we might get another \$8000. Mitch Wacksman offered that the Mountain Biking Club may be able to help with volunteers and materials for trail maintenance. They have worked on Winnicks Woods the last couple of years. He will see if there is a project that the bicyclists particularly want to work on.

Stonegate – Trail issues, replace bridge and boardwalk. Need signage. Need to create a linkage to Robinson Woods. A budget estimate is \$3000.

Great Pond – The broken culvert pipe is hazardous. It appears to be on our easement and part of the property of the Sprague Corporation.

Cross Hill – Sections at the Hawthorne Road end are really swampy and need to be improved. The back side also needs signage. The Bike crew can take on this project, including materials. Near the pond there is deep standing water for a couple of hundred feet. The farmer should be asked whether the water level can be lowered. That area is the primary access from Leighton Farm.

Spurwink Trail – Our tree warden, Mike Duddy may have some money available to help clear the old Jordan/ Pollack Creek cemetery in there. The cemetery is on private land on which we have an easement. The area across from Gull Crest needs 200 feet of gravel base. We also need to contact the Historical Society.

Spurwink Marsh DOI Easement – Need a gravel base at the Poor Farm link.

Gull Crest – Need to talk to the horseback riders because they are on the trails already. Mike Duddy also is willing to help with improvements to the Fowler Road Connector, we will pay for materials.

Winnick Woods – Good shape. Eastman Meadows subdivision trail link will need attention when it comes through.

Whaleback – Needs a bridge, boardwalk, improvements to the steep trail access. It would be great to have access across Rt. 77 along the brook to Great Pond, and also across Old Ocean House to Shore Acres.

Wildwood - There is a potential for trails in there.

Dyer Woods – Needs clearing, signage, maybe some bridge construction.

If we can find an easement that we want to buy, that money can come out of the land acquisition fund. We paid \$2.57 a linear foot for some earlier easements.

John Planinsek and Garvan Donegan will meet with the horse trail representatives on Thursday, March 22 at 11:00. Maureen will take care of setting up that meeting, and request that Jessica also participate. Richard Bauman and John Marchewka may also be able to attend.

Priorities: Stonegate Trail; Dyer Woods; Great Pond culvert; Pollack Creek Jordan cemetery; Gull Crest horse trail; Poor Farm link; Fowler Road connector; Two Lights boardwalk.

6. New England cottontails. Garvan Donegan reported that there are funds available to do habitat management in Cape Elizabeth. Website is [New England Cottontails.org](http://NewEnglandCottontails.org). They have two projects underway in Cape, the State Park and the Sprague lands. We have designated an area in Winnick Woods as cottontail habitat. Maureen reported that she was contacted today by Jeff Feaga about planting in privately owned wetlands for cottontail habitat. New England cottontails are threatened, in order to survive they need a thick, shrubby habitat 8 feet high. As farms went out of use, their habitat increased, now as farmlands are being developed, their habitat is decreasing.

7. Planning goals for 2012. Update Greenbelt Plan: Loveitt Woods link; Broad Cove/Shore Acres link. New England cottontail.

8. FOSP update. The Planner reported that last night the charge for the Future Open Space Preservation Committee was changed to eliminate the Key parcels list. Their completion date

has been moved to December 31, 2012. They have talked informally about a land bond. They did a cost-benefit analysis of purchasing land for open space versus the land being developed. There may be a more formal basis for evaluating open space acquisition. Their number 1 priority is farmland, number 2 is trails and connectors, number 3 is habitat and wildlife.

9. Outer Loop Trail update. It looks awesome, and we have paid for the work. The contractor will go out and make any necessary adjustments when the ice is gone.

10. Planning Board review. No comment required.

11. Great Pond boat racks update. We have received more applications than slots, so the 4 people who got them last year and didn't use them will not be getting slots. We're at about 40 applications now, and the deadline is March 23. There are 32 slots available, including the 4 under-sized slots that are allotted to kayaks. The Council approved all the recommendations the Commission made for this year's program.

12. Correspondence. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection is presenting a conference on "The Advantages of Low Impact Development for Smart Stormwater Management" on March 28 in Augusta. We will pay the fee for any Commissioners who want to attend.

13. Trail "marketing." It would be nice to do a write-up on a trail and photos to publish as Trail of the Month. Maureen will draft the first one.

14. Public works trail maintenance. Brendan Sweeney will be doing this through Public Works again this year.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Next meeting: April 10, 2012 at 7:00.