

Conservation Committee Meeting
January 10, 2018

Present: Jim Tasse, Marti Blair, Mark Fleming, Jeremy Gabrielson, Zach Matzkin, Mitch Wacksman

Maureen O'Meara (staff)
Nick and Jeff from Great Northern Docks (GND)

Meeting resumed at 8:15 p.m in the Lower Level Conference Room after the first item, the Cliff House Beach Steps Public Forum, was adjourned at 8:05 p.m. in the Town Council chambers.

2. Cliff House Beach Stairs. The committee discussed the various stair options with Nick, Great Northern Docks (GND). Mr. Gabrielson confirmed that, with 2 railings, there is a clear width of 41". He is concerned with people carrying things down to the beach. He also asked about how far damage to the concrete would travel when the steps are bolted and the bottom steps are damaged by the ocean. Nick recommended that anchoring to the concrete occur on the top 2/3rd of the stairs.

Mr. Tasse asked about the modules. The discussion was for the bottom of the stairs be constructed with a 1, 2 and then 3 step module to facilitate replacing the least amount if damage occurs. Nick said damage would be replaced to the last permanent installation.

Ms. Blair asked about the bottom landing of the steps. Nick said the steps would be anchored by driving pipes into the earth. She asked about the midpoint landing. Nick recommended a single run for public access use. He said that people rarely stop on a landing but rather get down the steps. He has seen landings in private installations, but those often include a bench for viewing.

Mr. Tasse asked for an estimate to add a second rail. Nick suggested \$2,000.

Mr. Meyers suggested that with 2 railings, they can function like skids, and favors 1 railing.

Mr. Wacksman asked if a second railing could be added later. Nick agreed that could be done. He also suggested a second railing could be installed only for the lower half where the slope of the hill falls off. Mr. Wacksman

suggested the Conservation Committee should make a recommendation. The steps are a safety issue and not acting may result in shutting the beach down.

Mr. Wacksman made a motion to recommend to the Town Council that replacement of the Cliff House Beach steps be included in the CIP budget for an estimated cost of \$20,000 with a single run at a 30% slope and one railing. Mr. Gabrielson seconded the motion and it passed 6-0. Ms. O'Meara will prepare the recommendation for the Conservation Committee Chair review.

Tom Meyers, 4 Sea View Ave - He was previously a City of South Portland Department head and understands local government. He does not want to be the unwelcoming curmudgeon when folks visit Cliff House Beach and he does not view it as "our" beach. He is concerned with activities at the beach that no longer make it pleasant to visit. He believes the Conservation Committee has the authority to get involved in beach management, but understands that delegation from the town council is advisable and will pursue that parallel track. Mr. Tasse suggested organizing a neighborhood group that can put together a list of concerns. A sign with rules of behavior may be a good first step.

3. Citizen Comments.

Justin Strout, Portland resident, representative of the Strout Family Trust- He asked if the committee reviews Resource Protection (RP) permits and was told yes. He asked how that review was done. When does the review occur if the Planning Board is meeting? Ms. O'Meara suggested Mr. Strout be direct with the Conservation Committee about his concern. He stated that he is an abutter to the 19 Wells Rd tower application, which needs an RP permit and the committee may not know that Ms. O'Meara told the Planning Board at the last meeting that their comments do not matter. Mr. Wacksman said the Conservation Committee is advisory and Mr. Tasse asked if the Conservation Committee will see the RP permit.

Ms. O'Meara explained that the 19 Wells Rd application was pulled from the January Planning Board meeting (January 16th) and will likely be on the February 26th Planning Board meeting. The 19 Wells Rd applicants were scheduled to attend tonight's Conservation Committee meeting, but withdrew from the agenda. The RP permit can be reviewed at the February 13th Conservation Committee meeting, which provides an opportunity for the Conservation Committee to provide advice prior to the next Planning Board meeting.

Ms. O'Meara continued that, at the December 19, 2017 meeting, she explained that the Conservation Committee was advisory to the Planning Board, so the Planning Board could have made a decision at that meeting. The Conservation Committee did not provide a recommendation at the December Planning Board meeting because its December 12th meeting was cancelled due to a snowstorm.

4. Election of Chair

The committee noted that Jim Tasse was term limited out from serving another term as chair. Jeremy Gabrielson was unanimously elected chair (6-0).

5. Planning Board agenda review

The committee reviewed the plans for an after the fact Resource Protection Permit for 26 Hannaford Cove Rd. The committee was uncomfortable with the RP2 wetland filling, but also felt constrained that the current owner had not placed the fill. There was a suggestion to assign a fine to the current property owners as part of issuing the permit but this did not have sufficient support.

A motion was made by Mr. Tasse, seconded by Mr. Gabrielson, to allow the RP permit. The motion failed 2-4.

The committee focused on the extent of wetland fill and a desire to restore some of the filled area, while allowing the fill placed immediately behind the house to remain.

A second motion, made by Ms. Blair and seconded by Mr. Fleming, recommended approval with the requirement that the pipe be installed and that fill located more than 30' from the house foundation be removed and restored to wetland with native plants. The motion passed 6-0.

6. Greenbelt Plan Priorities. The committee agreed to push this to the February meeting due to the lateness of the hour.

7. Greenbelt Implementation projects. The committee agreed to move this to the next meeting. Ms. O'Meara recommended that budget items also be discussed at the next meeting and distributed an updated estimate of costs for the Pollack Brook bridge and trail project.

Mr. Tasse updated the Conservation Committee on the purchase of a "snow dog," which can be used to groom snow on trails, by the New England Mountain Biking Association (NEMBA). The Snow dog is 52" by 20". Grooming would benefit fatbikes, walkers, skiers, and all trail users. The Conservation Committee agreed to allow grooming at Winnick Woods as a pilot project and emphasized that these are multi-user trails.

8. The committee pushed the Comprehensive Plan update to the February meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.