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Conservation Commission Minutes
Date: May 11, 2022
In-Person Meeting with Zoom Video Conferencing

Conservation Commissioners Present: Catherine Bendheim, Linda Garat, Theo Pratt, Leslie Spear, Henry Spencer, Sondra Wallace.

Conservation Commissioners Absent: Eileen Skarka

Others Present: Sally Merchant (by Zoom), Wes Pratt.

I. **Call to order** by Chair Theo Pratt at 5:00PM.

II. **Adjustments to Agenda.** None.

III. **Review and Approval of April 13, 2022, Meeting Minutes.** Unanimously approved.

IV. **Old Business.**

A. Update on topics/speakers for programs. Theo and Wes Pratt will give a talk and slide show on the Weskeag River on Thursday, May 26, at the Historical Society. The event will begin with a potluck dinner at 6PM, followed by the lecture at 7PM, the latter lasting approximately 45 minutes, with 15 minutes for questions. Catherine Bendheim asked Theo to draft a précis of the presentation, which could be sent to members of the Historical Society as well as to the Town's email distribution list. Henry Spencer will publicize the lecture (not the potluck) via the Knox County Village Soup and The Free Press.

Sondra Wallace raised the subject of other educational programs, and it was agreed that each Commissioner will contact her with up to ten topics from the extensive list she compiled. She can then conclude which are the most pressing and of greatest interest. Sondra stressed the importance of having a sign-up sheet available at the Roadside Cleanup, the Weskeag River presentation, and a sign-up/survey for the Annual Town Meeting, to gauge public interest and obtain the names of conservation-motivated individuals. Theo asked Sondra to create the sign-up and survey forms.

Sondra also indicated that if we gather the names and contact information of persons interested in our efforts, she would be willing to set up an email distribution list and maintain it. This would be if the Select Board grants permission to us to have our own list, and if so, would we use it in conjunction with the Town's public announcement list?

B. Update on plans for the May 21 roadside/coastal cleanup. Henry volunteered to go to the library on May 14 to promote the event among the patrons present, put more of our posters up, obtain the food for the cookout, and organize the treasure hunt. Theo will supply certificates of completion that can be distributed to children. Leslie Spear will assist with her truck and moving Henry's bbq grill. She mentioned that a particular hotspot for cleanup is Buttermilk Lane. Regarding the next of two cleanups per year, Catherine suggested focusing on the shoreline in mid to end of September. Theo will check the tide charts for whatever date we select and recommended using signage to promote our events.

C. Upcoming webinars on conservation issues. Theo proposed that at least one Commissioner attend the *Stream Smart Training - Phase One* workshop hosted by the Maine Audubon & Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District, on May 26 at the Camden Opera House and online. Henry plans to participate and will report back to the STCC. The knowledge gained on the vital issue of water quality can then be used for one of our educational presentations, and It's a networking opportunity.

D. Review of attendance requirements for Commissioners and possible vacancies for the 2022-2023 term which will begin on July 1. Although the STCC has no specific attendance requirement, if a Commissioner infrequently takes part in meetings and/or events, we could approach the Select Board and let it know that there is a problem. Catherine and Linda have both agreed to serve for the next term.

E. Status of appointment of Associate Members by the Select Board. Sally Merchant and Wes Pratt have been approved. They may speak at meetings but cannot vote. Henry will follow up with Terri Baines re: ensuring she has his correct email address and ask that she add Sally and Wes to the conservationcommission@souththomaston.me distribution list.

F. Review of initial drafts of documents related to our mission. This pertains to the five attachments Sondra emailed on April 13, to be considered over the coming years. Theo requested that each Commissioner reread these documents and rank our priorities for further discussion.

G. Status of Annual Report. Completed, submitted.

H. Possible sources of funding. Theo brought up the 5-cent refundable deposit on aluminum cans. The benefits of collecting them, including at events such as the cleanups, is that we are recycling AND generating income. She also stated that donations are not part of the budget, and Catherine said that we should give thought to applying for grants.

V. New Business. The Weskeag River presentation and the *Stream Smart Training* were covered by points IV A., and IV C., respectively.

VI. **Items for next Agenda.** We will discuss strategic planning, developing a mission statement, and interfacing with other conservation associations.

VII. **Adjourn.** A motion to adjourn was made by Henry at 6:12PM, seconded by Leslie. The motion passed.