



**Town of South Thomaston, Maine**  
**125 Spruce Head Road**  
**P.O. Box 147**  
**South Thomaston, ME 04858-0147**

**Tel:** 207-596-6584  
**Fax:** 207-596-7529  
**E-mail:** [terri@souththomaston.me](mailto:terri@souththomaston.me)  
**Website:** [www.souththomaston.me](http://www.souththomaston.me)

**Selectboard:**  
Jeff Northgraves  
Walter Reitz  
John Spear

Conservation Commission Minutes, July 13, 2022  
In-Person Meeting at South Thomaston Town Office, with Zoom Video Conferencing

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

Others Present: Wes Pratt, Associate Member

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

**II-A. Adjustment to Agenda; Election of Officers for July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023.** Sondra Wallace stated that the election of officers for July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023, should take place at the beginning of the meeting, and that nominations and a second are required. The results of voting from the floor were as follows: Henry Spencer, Chair, Sondra Wallace, Vice-Chair, and Linda Garat, Secretary.

**II-B. Further Adjustments to Agenda.** Sondra wished to provide an update on native vs. invasive plants (see item IV, H). Catherine Lerne asked us to consider for future discussion the possibility of a recreational committee being formed. Would this fall within STCC responsibilities, and would we want to take a lead in this undertaking, and consider a partnership with the Library and Community Center? It was agreed that this subject will be included on the next agenda under New Business.

**III. Review and Approval of June 8, 2022, Meeting Minutes.** Unanimously approved.

**IV. Old Business.**

**A. Report on plans for September roadside/coastal cleanup.** Henry stated that much of the planning will be the same as our event in May, but we need to generate more publicity. Sondra noted that one opportunity for doing so is showing up at the Library on Saturdays to spread the word about our efforts. Two dates for the cleanup are Saturday, September 24, and Saturday, October 1. For either, we should check when the tide will be low and remember that the transfer station closes at 4PM (and must be notified in advance of our event).

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Henry also suggested that we use our budget to buy some grabbers, which might help avoid ticks and make it easier for senior volunteers to collect trash. At the next meeting, organizational responsibilities will be assigned to the Commissioners.

Wes Pratt said that the Weskeag Marsh on Buttermilk is a jewel and should be included in cleanup efforts, along with the area around the boat ramp opposite the Keag Store. Catherine added that Dublin Road always needs attention.

**B. Report on responses to the sign-up sheet and surveys from the Town Meeting.** There were only four responses to the sign-up sheet, and two to the survey, per Sondra. She felt that the volume of handouts at the meeting was overwhelming and perhaps was the reason our materials were overlooked. Henry proposed that he or Sondra write the Select Board asking if we can be allotted five minutes at the next meeting to promote the STCC. Catherine cited voting day in November as being another great opportunity to meet residents, inform them of our goals and recruit volunteers. Hopefully the Select Board might permit us to set up a table in the entrance hall of the Town Office.

**C. Update on the possibility of the Commission having a dedicated distribution list.** The consensus is that currently this is not a priority and should be deleted from Old Business. We will continue to use the town's website to convey information.

**D. Collection of aluminum cans since the last meeting.** Theo brought in cans and encouraged the other Commissioners to do so next time.

**E. Delivery of names of volunteers to Town Office for insurance coverage.** Sondra affirmed that if the names of Associate Members and volunteers are relayed to the town, specifically to Terri Baines, they are covered. As we attract more volunteers, we need to continue to keep the town informed.

**F. Receive maps donated by Andrew Stancioff and Sandy Retzlaff.** Theo gave the maps to Henry, who is interested in creating an inventory as well as finding a home for them at the Town Office. Catherine would like to have at least one map mounted in the meeting area to spark interest amongst the townspeople and the various boards which convene there.

**G. Status of development of a mission statement and interfacing with other towns.** On July 5 Catherine sent the Commissioners a sampling of mission statements from nine towns. In her opinion there is lots of repetition, with the Gardiner statement being best because it is brief but informative. Linda Garat crafted a statement based on Gardiner's, for future review by the Commissioners.

#### *South Thomaston Conservation Commission Mission Statement*

The Mission of the South Thomaston Conservation Commission (STCC) is to protect, preserve, and beautify our publicly-owned spaces, in partnership with existing town boards and committees, like-minded conservation groups, and volunteers. Via cooperation with landowners,

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we hope to encourage these same goals on private property. The STCC seeks to create opportunities for every citizen to become informed about, access, and enjoy South Thomaston's many natural resources.

**H. Educational program: native vs. invasive plants.** Sondra spoke with Rebecca Jacobs (Program Manager) of the Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District, whose colleague is Louisa Crane (Program Coordinator). Both have expertise regarding native vs. invasive plants. They are not available to give an educational presentation before the end of October, so we might schedule one on Wednesday, October 26, or Wednesday, November 2. Catherine suggested holding the talk at the Library, to accommodate more guests than at the Historical Society.

#### **V. New Business.**

**A. Organizing a public walk on the Stump Dump Trail.** Saturday, September 10, is a potential date for this event. Wes offered his availability. He estimates the walk would take 30 minutes to 1 hour to complete. Leslie Spear will make posters. A path needs to be marked and a loop would be optimum. This subject needs to be moved to Old Business for the next meeting.

**B. Report on the Maine Climate Conference held June 17<sup>th</sup>.** Theo attended this day-long program and is highly enthusiastic about the myriad opportunities for grant money for communities to pursue climate action. She will present information about the grants to the Select Board on July 14. It must actively elect to participate and support these efforts in order to proceed.

**VI. Items for next Agenda.** As noted above.

**VII. Adjourn.** A motion to adjourn was made by Henry at 6:17PM, seconded by Catherine. The motion passed.