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Conservation Commission Minutes, October 12, 2022
In-Person Meeting at the Town Office, with Zoom Video Conferencing

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

Participation by Zoom: Nancy Goslin

I. Call to Order. Henry Spencer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:05PM.

II. Adjustments to Agenda. Catherine Lerne and Theo Pratt each indicated that they would like to propose a potential Commissioner or Associate (please see New Business).

III. Review and Approval of September 14, 2022, Meeting Minutes. Unanimously approved.

IV. Old Business.

A. Update on plans for the October 15 Town Landing/Buttermilk Lane cleanup. Henry will buy food and organize the grill. Supplies (safety vests, gloves, etc.) are in the basement of the Gilford Butler Building. Participants will convene there, and we should obtain contact data on a sign-up sheet. Leslie Spear informed the transfer station about our event and will take the trash there in her truck. Theo added that it would be a good idea to take pictures of the accumulated garbage. She will bring blue receptacles for volunteers to fill with collected aluminum cans and will be responsible for their redemption.

For our spring event, it was suggested that specific trash pickup spots be designated. Regarding road signage, Henry will check out the business that Theo cited during September's meeting, although we could consider ordering from an online vendor. He can make a sample single color two-sided sign to get quotes.

B. Update on plans for the October 26 educational program: invasive vs. native plants. The program will start at 6:30PM, not 6PM, at the Gilford Butler Center. Leslie made a poster, which must be amended with the correct start time before distribution. Sondra sent press releases to

the Free Press, the Courier Gazette of the Knox County Village Soup, as well as the PenBay Pilot, and the event will be posted on our town's listserv by Terri Baines. For signage, Pennie Alley told Sondra that the Library's signs are in high demand, but we can use one "the week of." Apparently, the town sign is broken, and we should explore the possibility of using the Historical Society's sign. Sondra confirmed that our speaker, Rebecca Jacobs, will use Powerpoint and a microphone, and agreed to be recorded. On October 17, Sondra will meet with Pennie for instruction on operating the tech equipment.

C. Update on the Community Resilience Partnership. Per Theo, the working group met on October 9, with seven persons in attendance. The initial step in the Partnership - the Community Evaluation - was reviewed. Community Outreach is step two, and this will be the subject of a meeting on Sunday, October 16 at 2PM, at the Gilford Butler Center, open to all. Theo asked Dr. Ralph Hamill to join the group, who said he would, and expressed that Krista Tripp of Aphrodite Oysters would also be a great addition. Leslie lives near Krista and might be able to speak to her about it. Everyone in the working group should talk to neighbors about the Partnership and get feedback about the most pressing climate change issues.

Sondra asked for clarification on the involvement of Meg Rasmussen, Community Sustainability Planner with the Midcoast Council of Governments. Theo stated that Meg is waiting for a Service Provider Grant. If she does not receive it, she will not get paid. If necessary, the Partnership will proceed without external facilitation, which is what Thomaston is doing, as indicated by Mr. John Fancy. Theo also noted that South Thomaston does not have to apply for support in tandem with Owls Head.

At this time no direct STCC assistance is required, other than retaining the subject on our Agenda each month for updates, and perhaps issuing a statement that we are in favor of the Partnership.

D. Report on follow-up to the August 26 walk/meeting with Jeff Smith concerning possible conservation status for his 100 acres. Three Commissioners took this walk: Linda, Catherine, and Leslie. Several issues were identified: Mr. Smith wants no development on the land, which is valued by the town at \$200,000. He would be willing to sell it for \$50,000, but there is no money for this. If the STCC were to partner with the Georges River Land Trust to purchase the land - and the GRLT knows how to raise money - what would we have to do to protect it? Would the town's adjacent land have to be put under protection? What kind of maintenance would have to be carried out? Would this be called a "town forest?"

Catherine spoke with Irene Flynn, Stewardship & Land Protection Manager at the GRLT, and consulted a guide, available on the GRLT website, published by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, entitled *Conservation Options: A Guide for Maine Landowners* (2011). It may not be totally current. It was suggested that we approach the Select Board about placing the town land under protection, then ultimately incorporate Mr. Smith's acreage into this parcel. Theo said this could potentially be a goal of the Community Resilience Partnership. Catherine and Sondra agreed to form a working group to focus on this opportunity.

E. Update on resources/procedures for STCC notices to the public. Sondra thought it would be helpful to add a timeline indicating, for example, what needs to be accomplished one month before, one week before, etc., STCC events and education outreach. In addition, we should make sure we officially thank speakers and others who assist the STCC.

F. Progress report on updates to the STCC web page (Mission Statement, etc.). We need to ascertain if the Select Board has any concerns about our proposed Mission Statement. Henry and Sondra will follow up on this.

Reporting from the working group formed at the September meeting, Sondra noted that it identified updates needed to the website and/or the STCC webpage (e.g., the list of Commissioners; their terms). These can be put in final form and forwarded to Terri.

The group has also embarked on a longer-range goal of considering other possible improvements to the website. For example, the same information – Office Hours/Credit and Debit Cards Now Accepted – appears in the right-hand column of every page on the website. If this information could be limited to the home page, each committee or other entity could use that space on its web page to provide details about its own activities, events, web links, etc. It was suggested that the St. George and Owls Head websites be studied for ideas for potential modifications to the Town website. It was noted, however, that these and other design changes would affect other Town components, which should have an opportunity to weigh in.

Leslie brought up the Library website – sotholib.org – saying it is separate from the Town's website and in a very different format. Apparently, it is grandfathered as an independent entity.

G. Update on the disposition of maps donated by Andrew Stancioff and Sandy Retzlaff. The Huston-Tuttle store in Rockland offers office services. Henry will cut up one of the sets of donated maps and have them laminated as 18 X 20 inch finished products. He does not know what the cost for this will be.

H. Collection of aluminum cans since the last meeting (please bring them). An ongoing effort.

V. New Business. Potential Commissioner or Associate: Catherine had a conversation with Louise Vadala, who joined the Historical Society and who expressed interest in the STCC. Theo spoke to Neil Cambridge, who is motivated to take part in the working group of the Community Resilience Partnership, and who contacted John Spear to let the Select Board know that he is willing to serve on the STCC. Nancy Goslin, who attended this meeting by Zoom, will consider future participation.

VI. Items for next Agenda. Theo asked if we could host a public event based on the motto “reuse, repair, recycle.” Henry said this could be part of our lecture series.

VII. Adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Sondra at 6:22PM, seconded by Leslie. The motion passed.