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Conservation Commission Minutes, November 9, 2022
In-Person Meeting at the Town Office, with Zoom Video Conferencing

Commissioners Present: Neil Cambridge, Linda Garat, Catherine Lerme, 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. Sondra Wallace stated that on November 2 the STCC received an email from John Knuerr of the St. George Conservation Commission re: collaborating with it, Owls Head and Thomaston on a brown tail moth workshop with several speakers. This subject will be addressed tonight under New Business.

III. Introduction of new Commissioner, Neil Cambridge. Neil, who has lived in South Thomaston for five years, has an extensive background and interest in sustainability, connections, resources. Henry will provide him with a copy of the STCC by-laws.

IV. Review and Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (October 12, 2022). Henry made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Theo Pratt, then unanimously approved.

V. Old Business.

A. Report on October 15 Town Landing/Buttermilk Lane cleanup. Leslie Spear said that a substantial amount of trash was collected and that she made a number of trips to the transfer station. Theo noted that a pile of cans was gathered, which she separated from the trash for redemption. Wes Pratt took photos of the accumulation.

Planning for the next cleanup, in late April or early May, should take place at our meeting in March. It was suggested that we discuss organizing small groups of volunteers to cover specific

parts of the town, encourage folks who want to clean up near their home to do so, establish drop-off locations in addition to Gilford Butler, and try to enlist persons with trucks so the onus is not entirely on Leslie. Sondra reminded that we need to give the names of volunteers to Terri Baines, so the town's insurance would kick in, if needed.

B. Update on plans for educational program: Invasive vs. Native Plants, rescheduled to November 16. Our speaker, Rebecca Jacobs, has recovered from Covid, and will present a Powerpoint. Sondra noted that Pennie Alley purchased a new outdoor sign for the library, which is being used to publicize the program. The talk will be held in the room with two doors rather than the space with only one door, so we can accommodate twice as many attendees.

C. Update on the Community Resilience Partnership. Per Theo, the highly energetic working group now numbers eleven, including Nancy Goslin, although it is still missing someone from the fishing community. Sondra suggested Bob Baines, who is on the town's Budget Committee and also the Board of Directors of the Maine Lobstermen's Association. Theo said that Mr. Baines would be welcome at the next working group meeting on Sunday, November 13 at 2PM, and Sondra will ask him if he might have any suggestions regarding other fishing people.

Theo emphasized that when we talk to friends and neighbors about the Partnership we do so as individuals, not as STCC Commissioners, and that it's important during the enrollment part of the process to determine which climate action goals our community wants to pursue.

D. Update on possible Associate Members. No updates, other than that Nancy Goslin is a possibility and she should let us know if she wants to become an Associate Member.

E. Follow-up discussion on opportunities to bring land into conservation status. Catherine Lerne contacted the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry, and ended up at the *Land for Maine's Future Program*, a primary funding vehicle for acquiring and conserving land. It's a big program, with a number of components, and can be accessed via maine.gov. Catherine also reached out to the District Forestry service to see if someone can come and take a look at the 100-acre town property to assess the trees, if they are healthy, etc., but the pertinent individual has not yet gotten back to her. Ideally, this parcel could become protected, and along with Jeff Smith's contiguous 100 acres, form a 200-acre forest for wildlife and recreation.

Theo cited Matt Bonner, the Trails & Public Access Program Manager at Georges River Land Trust, as being a very helpful person with whom to move the goal forward.

F. Update on resources/procedures for STCC notices to the public. Sondra is developing a list of press contacts, deadlines, and places to post announcements. It was agreed that we should put together a binder consisting of this and other data on the work of the STCC. We hope, in future, to collaborate with other town conservation commissions to help publicize each other's events.

Henry has been working on finding inexpensive corrugated campaign-type signs for use during roadside cleanups - including with a safety message - and at the next meeting will have prices based on 25 signs, with potential wording we can consider.

G. Update concerning Mission Statement. Sondra ascertained that the Select Board was not previously in receipt of the statement, so on October 26 she sent it to them, with the expectation that it might be evaluated at the next Select Board Meeting. *N.B. It will be, on November 15, under VI, New Business, point B: "Consider Accepting the Conservation Commission Mission Statement."*

H. Progress report on updates to the town website and STCC web page. No progress reported.

I. Update on disposition of maps donated by Andrew Stancioff and Sandy Retzlaff. Henry thinks he can get one of the maps laminated into two or three 18 x 22" pieces. A photo could be taken of the legend and put on the back of the lamination. Catherine added that a map indicating wetlands would be useful to the STCC, as well as to the Planning Board. Theo recalled an awesome map of forested areas which could be laminated, and Leslie would like to have one delineating Jeff Smith's property.

Henry mentioned storage of the maps and Leslie said it is likely there is some place in the town's office for this.

J. Collection of aluminum cans since the last meeting (please bring them). In December Theo will update us on our financial position.

VI. New Business.

A. Brown-tail moth workshop (co-sponsor with St. George CC). Sondra answered Mr. Knuerr's email expressing interest, and the Commissioners agreed it would be worthwhile to involve the STCC in this event. Mr. Knuerr is currently away, but Sondra will contact him again upon his return. We need to determine what the STCC's role will be. We also agreed that, more broadly, we would like to open up lines of collaboration and facilitation on the peninsula. Let's get to know the other conservation groups: what are their interests and strengths? There will be a great deal of overlap on issues. What about hosting a bi-annual (summer and winter) meeting? This subject will be included under "New Business" at our next meeting.

VII. Items for next Agenda. As previously listed.

VIII. Adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Catherine at 6PM, seconded by Henry. The motion passed.