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Conservation Commission Minutes, April 12, 2023
In-Person Meeting at the Gilford Butler Center, no Zoom Video Conferencing

Commissioners present: Neil Cambridge, Linda Garat, Theo Pratt, Leslie Spear, Henry Spencer

Commissioners not in attendance: Catherine Lerme, Sondra Wallace

Associate Members present: Sally Merchant. Others present: John Spear (for part of the meeting)

I. Call to Order. Henry Spencer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:00PM.

II. Adjustments to Agenda. Consideration of an email dated April 10 from Peter Mecklenburg re: creating a walking path between the intersection of Pine Tree Road & Browns Road with the eastern end of Snowhill Lane, was added to New Business.

III. Old Business.

A. Update on Earth Day, April 22, clean-up day planning. Leslie Spear confirmed that she will inform the Transfer Station about our event, and use her truck to transport the collected trash there. She said it would be helpful to have someone assist her with this transport. A motion was made by Theo Pratt, seconded by Leslie, and unanimously approved, for Leslie to use up to \$140 of our non-appropriated funds to purchase sturdy grabbers. We should keep track of who borrows them, perhaps noting this on the volunteer sign-up sheet, as well as ask people where they plan to leave the garbage OR bring it back to GBC, where we can photograph it.

Henry will pick up the signage, doublecheck supplies at GBC, set up tables around 8AM and organize a cookout, but on a simpler scale than the last one.

B. Update on procurement of signs for clean-up days. As noted above, Henry will pick them up.

C. Update and expense report on disposition of maps donated by Andrew Stancioff. Sally Merchant offered to contact Andrew to see how he's doing and to express our gratitude for the maps he special-ordered, one of which has been framed for the Town Office. Composing a letter of appreciation and delivering it in person was also mentioned.

D. Update on Community Resilience Partnership. Neil Cambridge confirmed that South Thomaston is enrolled in the CRP, and that once it has gone before the Select Board to be approved (per John Spear), the next step is to submit a proposal to the state for a grant. Within 4-6 weeks the next monies should be available. The optimum site for the solar project is the Town Office, with panels on the roof, which may increase the latter's life span. However, John said it should be taken into consideration that this building will need to be reroofed in a few years.

In addition, it was noted that when this undertaking is completed, another grant could be proposed, using the experience that has been gained.

E. Report on greenhouse gas data collection project (Neil Cambridge). Neil stated that in one sense, the effort is complete, although there remains a fairly large chunk of data on emissions that we do not yet have, e.g., what is the energy usage at the Transfer Station, what is the usage at the Town Office?

F. Further discussion of proposed repair-reuse-recycle day (Theo Pratt). Theo said that this would be better as a fall project. We need to find individuals with practical skills who are willing to help others fix stuff - small electronics and furniture, toys, bicycles, torn clothing, etc. - for free and keep it out of landfills.

G. Further discussion of possible fundraisers: map sales at Earth Day; yard sale. Theo can set up a table on Earth Day to sell maps for \$20 each.

IV. New Business.

A. Email sent by Peter Mecklenburg. It was agreed that this is a promising idea, and that we could invite Mr. Mecklenburg to speak about it at another of the STCC meetings. Neil added that one thing to bear in mind is that when paths are created, they have to be maintained (including dealing with invasive species).

B. Discussion concerning priorities for the coming year. There is the repair-reuse-recycle day, and Henry stated that speakers are important, especially those whose expertise includes concerns such as water quality. He suggested adding to the Agenda a subheading on speakers and lectures. Sondra is collaborating with other Conservation Commissions, with goals that include organizing a joint conference.

Neil requested, on behalf of Carla White and the ad hoc Community Resilience Committee, that the STCC write a letter in support of their efforts. Henry will create a draft and circulate it to the Commissioners for approval.

Leslie agreed to sign the STCC up for the CLYNK bottle redemption program.

C. Status of our non-appropriated funds; possible uses. Purchase of grabbers for clean-up days.

V. Items for next Agenda. As indicated above.

VI. Adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Leslie at 6:00PM, seconded by Sally. The motion passed.