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Conservation Commission Minutes, March 8, 2023
In-Person Meeting at the Town Office, with Zoom Video Conferencing

Commissioners Present: Neil Cambridge, Linda Garat, Catherine Lerne, Theo Pratt, Sondra Wallace.

Commissioners not in attendance: Leslie Spear, Henry Spencer

Associate Members present: Sally Merchant, Wes Pratt

I. Call to Order. Sondra Wallace, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:09PM.

II. Adjustments to Agenda. Two of the Commissioners had to leave the meeting at 6PM, so the sequence of several items to be discussed was adjusted. The following items were deferred to the next meeting:

IV. Old Business.

- D. Update on open space index/land conservation.
- G. Update on coordination with other Conservation Commissions/planning for conference.
- H. Update on disposition of maps.
- I. Further discussion of possible fundraisers.

V. New Business.

- A. Discussion concerning priorities for the coming year.
- B. Status of non-appropriated funds; possible uses.

III. Review and Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes: February 8, 2023. Catherine Lerne made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Theo Pratt, then unanimously approved.

IV. Old Business.

- A. Update on Annual Report for FY 2022-2023. It has been completed and submitted.

B. Update on STCC budget request for FY 2023-2024. Sondra reported that our \$518 budget was approved. She also confirmed that, per Terri Baines, the \$70 charge for our email address was one-time only, so we do not need to budget for it for FY 2023-2024.

C. Update on Community Resilience Partnership. Per Neil Cambridge, final documents will be presented to the Select Board tomorrow for endorsement. The number one priority is a solar project, such as installing panels, to cut pollution and reduce the energy consumed by the town's municipal buildings, i.e., the town office and/or the Gilford Butler Center. Theo stated that the State government will likely open a window next month for submission of new applications for the \$50,000 grant money.

E. Update on Earth Day, April 22, clean-up day planning. Henry generated a list of preparations, and we are assuming (but need to confirm) that Leslie will inform the transfer station of the date of the event and transport the trash to it, and that Henry will obtain signs and grabbers, the latter possibly from Amazon. Theo mentioned E.L. Spear's Hardware (Ace) as another source. She said that the grabbers they sell are not cheap, but they are durable. Sondra added that we have the funds for these purchases in the current budget. It was suggested that when we loan volunteers a grabber, we make a note of this on our sign-up sheet.

Sondra said that she believes we have enough of the other supplies, which are in the basement of the GBC. Linda Garat will be responsible for publicity and for copying the sign-up sheets. Wes Pratt will take photos, including a picture of the accumulated trash in Leslie's truck. Neither Catherine nor Sondra will be at clean-up day.

F. Update on procurement of signs for clean-up days. Sondra to follow up with Henry.

V. New Business.

C. Report on greenhouse gas data collection project. Neil is representing South Thomaston in a greenhouse gas emissions data collection project involving local towns, organized by Meg Rasmussen of the Midcoast Council of Governments. He is currently collecting data on emissions by the municipal buildings. Sally voiced her concern about landscapers and grass clippings, which can generate heat-trapping methane, a greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming. Neil distributed initial information about ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) Local Governments for Sustainability. We will revisit this subject at the next meeting.

D. (Moved). Proposal for repair-repurpose-recycle day. Theo emphasized that there is much to be done. Activities and education about repairing will be the most challenging. Sally Merchant brought up the Repair Café in Belfast, a recurring opportunity for people to get help to fix broken

things. Its volunteers repair but also teach and build community by sharing skills. We could contact the café's organizers to gain insight as to how to proceed with the café concept in South Thomaston.

Vis-à-vis repurposing, Theo proposed a swap day, with no money exchanged. It could be held outdoors, perhaps with a bbq, and possibly coordinated with a Library event such as a book sale. Sally said there are people in St. George who seem to know a lot about swap meets. Catherine asked if our transfer station could have a secondhand shop. Theo would like to get the ball rolling for a swap day, and while no vote was taken, all the Commissioners were in favor of moving forward with this idea.

The third component is recycling, which elicited questions, including what takes place at the transfer station? Can the STCC find a knowledgeable person to come to talk to us about the recycling process? Neil broached the subject of community composting and that the Belfast Garden Club Evening Lecture Series recently focused on composting and its benefits. He would like to learn more about how food waste impacts the climate.

VI. Items for next Agenda. As indicated above.

VII. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6PM.