

Readfield Conservation Commission Minutes

November 10, 2015, 6:30 p.m., Town Office

Present: David Bagley, Jerry Bley, Martin Hanish, Bruce Hunter, Bob Mohlar, Tim Sniffen, Greg Durgin, Andy Walsh

Old Business

Meeting Minutes – RCC members approved the October 13, 2015 RCC meeting minutes with a minor change. Martin H. suggested that the Select Board request legal advice regarding whether or not the Vernal Pool Data form used during vernal pool surveys is confidential information.

Bruce H. and David B. both believe the data collected is public information. Tim S. agreed that the entire process was open to the public.

Greg D. indicated that a Maranacook student is interested in helping to finalize the vernal pool project data for final submission to the state.

Mill Stream Dam Project – Jerry B. presented the proposed Mill Stream Dam project plan and project components to the Select Board on Oct. 19th. A letter from Engineer Doug Riley regarding the stability of the dam structure was also presented. The Select Board unanimously approved a motion to work with the Planning Board in moving the project ahead. Jerry B. also met with the Town Manager, Eric Dyer, on-site to discuss the project. Mr. Dyer agreed with the overall intent and value of the project. Private funds will be raised for the project (no taxpayer monies). Greg D. has agreed to serve as co-project coordinator with Jerry B. to help organize fundraising and work days. The project will be a joint effort between the Conservation Commission and the Trails Committee.

Jerry B. summarized the project components to the group, indicating that the project scope is flexible in that not all components need be completed. He indicated that the overall cost of project is likely to be modest. Bob M. suggested that components that require minimal maintenance be considered. He also was concerned about the maintenance needed for railings on the dam and how they might impact the view. Jerry B. will discuss the project with the Readfield Historical Society to see if they have any concerns with the proposed work on the dam.

Jerry B. suggested scheduling a joint Conservation Commission/Trails Committee meeting at the Mill Stream Dam to determine which project components should be pursued. Liability and visitor safety were identified as potential concerns. Once the project scope is refined, RCC will return to the Select Board for project approval and a permit application will be submitted to DEP. The joint on-site meeting was tentatively scheduled for Dec. 5th at 9:30 a.m.

Torsey Pond Nature Preserve – Tim S., Howard Lake, and Jerry B. repaired the duck blind (“righted” and stabilized the structure) on November 1st.

Bruce H. and Andy W. walked the stream on the southerly margin of the Preserve on Nov. 1st in an effort to determine if erosion and sedimentation from the Belle Vue Farm fields (Kents Hill) is an ongoing issue. The Torsey Pond Association has voiced concerns about sedimentation from the fields affecting the pond. Evidence of sedimentation was noted near the mouth of the stream where it flows into the pond and severe bank erosion was observed along much of the stream course downgradient of Rt. 41. Several small retention ponds and riprap dissipators were observed at the lower end of the Belle Vue Farm fields bordering the woods. Based on observations, it appears that sufficient mitigation is in place to minimize erosive flows off the fields. The farm clearing, stream and pond should continue to be monitored during high flow events to ensure that the sedimentation is captured before reaching the stream.

Ballfield Governance Agreement – No updates. Greg D. is awaiting word regarding a Ballfield Cmte. meeting (to include the Recreation Cmte. and Conservation Commission) to discuss the governance agreement and other ballfield issues.

Access Road Gate Lock – Tim S. purchased a lock for the access road gate. Several keys will be needed for town departments including the Recreation Cmte., Fire Dept., Conservation Commission, Trails Cmte., Town office, etc.

Loam Pile – Jerry B. recommended that the loam pile be relocated off the trail between the cemetery and the ballfield. May need to cut a few trees. Dump truck access will be from the cemetery. Jerry B. is not sure if this site is on the cemetery or Fairgrounds property.

Belle Vue Farm – Jerry B. gave a brief summary of the status of Belle Vue Farm based on a conversation with Nina Young of the Maine Farmland Trust.

Readfield Town Beach – RCC members discussed Tom Donegan’s request for assistance in managing the town beach. RCC is not able to manage the beach but briefly discussed the option contributing toward the hiring of a beach manager using town forest funds (but never reached a consensus on this). Bob M. believes the Select Board should handle this issue. Martin H. asked whether Manchester residents should pay more for a beach pass than Readfield residents. Jerry B. recommended that RCC have a better understanding of what the needs are.

Town Conservation Properties

Torsey Pond Nature Preserve – Tim S. put up two “No Snowmobile/No ATV” signs behind the Pruitt house near Bean Hill Road.

Town Farm and Forest – no updates

Fogg Conservation Area – no updates

Fairgrounds – no updates

Meeting adjourned approx. 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by Andy Walsh (Secretary)