

Readfield Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 14, 2020, 6:30 pm, Town Office
Approved February 11, 2020

Present: Jerry Bley, Marty Hanish, Bruce Hunter, Greg Leimbach, Tim Sniffen
Excused: Greg Durgin, Andy Walsh, Brent West
Visiting: Stephanie Donaldson

Agenda was reviewed with items added.
Minutes of December 10, 2019 meeting were approved as corrected.

Budget matters:

Readfield Conservation Lands Account:

Teresa Shaw, Town Finance officer, reported a current balance of \$3291.39 with a \$1200 bill outstanding, a balance that was lower than we expected. She anticipates a \$7355 reimbursement from the Recreational Trails Program grant soon.

Bruce H, Jerry B, and Tim S will meet with her to review the balance before our meeting with Budget Comm later this week.

We also decided to include monthly reports on our accounts at our RCC meetings in the future.

Proposed RCC budget for 2020-21, drawn up at our December meeting, was reviewed and the following items were modified: Notes on discussions follow.

Regional conservation commissions gathering – estimated expense reduced to \$100.

Town Farm Forest road repair/improvement – reduced to \$7000.

Torsey Pond Nature Preserve (TPNP) trailhead repair – reduced to \$0.

Maine Assoc. of Conservation Commissions membership was discussed but not added.

Fairgrounds signs and trail maintenance – increased to \$500. See discussion of trail signs.

Readfield Conservation and Recreation Areas map – increased to \$600.

A motion was made that “The RCC will present a proposed budget for fiscal year 2020-2021 totaling \$10,950, and authorizes the Chair to make changes if necessary.” Motion passed unanimously.

(See note at end of minutes.)

Details from budget discussion:

1. Town Farm Forest road/trail repair –

Forester Harold Burnett had included roadwork in the logging contract for the upcoming harvest. The RCC may arrange for that work to be done separately and so may need to prepare RFP's this spring (March or April). Work would be billed in 2020-21 fiscal year.

To prepare RFP we will need to review Harold's description of the road repair. Jerry will ask Harold for copy of his recent lumbering contract. Jerry and Bruce offered to check dimensions of repair stretches if weather and conditions allow.

2. Maine Assoc of Conservation Commissions membership –
Marty H suggested rejoining the MEACC, giving opportunity for valuable cooperation. RCC's past membership was discussed. We decided not to join this year, but to consider it next year after discussion with other area commissions.
3. Trail Signs –
Town Manager Eric Dyer has suggested that the RCC coordinate with the Readfield Trails Comm (RTC) to start using a standard format (such as is found at the Fairgrounds) for all signage on the various Town properties. RCC is currently planning replacement of twenty or more trail signs at TPNP. To use heavy laminated plastic signs with routed lettering as used at the Fairgrounds would be very expensive.
Jerry (?) will arrange a meeting with Eric D and RTC representatives to discuss this question.
4. Readfield Conservation and Recreation Areas map –
We have planned for a revised and updated edition, with \$600 budgeted this fiscal year for work with the Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservation District who helped us with previous editions. Updates will include new conservation properties and new trails or other recreational areas in Readfield. We expect a number of changes, which may need to be checked with Kennebec Land Trust, New England Forestry Foundation, Maine Farmland Trust, Blizzard Busters, the Trails Comm, others?

In place of the present historical data, it was suggested we use the reverse side of the map for larger scale maps such as those prepared by the RTC or KLT showing particular trails or properties. We hope to republish the historical data elsewhere.

Brent W has begun work on this project. Will he continue to lead? Coordination with other organizations will be important.

Other items briefly discussed:

Morrill Rd connector trail at intersection of Sturtevant Hill Rd and Route 17 –
If this small parcel is considered Town Conservation Land, would RTC want RCC assistance with purchasing trail materials next year?

Former Belle Vue Farm parcel – This hill top farmland with important views has been for sale and now appears to be under contract. Jerry will check with Maine Farmland Trust to see if they have more information.

There may be a KLT snowshoe hike at TPNP on February 13. Tim will report details as available.

Tim reported that the Lake Maranacook dam rebuild is almost complete. This will allow for better control of lake levels, and may return the lake to its previous normal level, somewhat lower than has been seen for many years. Will there be impact on shore land/marshy areas?

Carleton Pond Watershed - There will be a meeting with the Greater Augusta Water District Board on Monday, January 27, 2020, 6:00 pm, at Augusta City Center. Bruce plus several other RCC/RTC members expect to attend. Open to all.

Fairgrounds parking lot report, hunting blind policy, other agenda items: referred to February meeting.

Meeting adjourned 8:30 pm

Submitted by Tim Sniffen

- Post Meeting Note: At review of Conservation Lands Account on 1/16/20 with Teresa Shaw and Eric Dyer, we found that our account is indeed lower than anticipated. Bruce, Jerry, and Tim decided to reduce the amount budgeted for the Town Farm Forest roadwork to \$6000. Thus our proposed budget submitted that evening was \$9,950.