

Readfield Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, March 9, 2021, Town Office

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

RCC Meeting Minutes - A motion was made by Tim S. and seconded by Greg D. to approve the February 9, 2020 meeting minutes as amended; unanimously approved by RCC members (Stephanie D. abstained).

### **New Business**

George Smith Donations - Thanks to all for donations on behalf of George Smith and thanks to Stephanie D. for preparing the card.

Farming and Agriculture in Readfield, RCC Game Plan – Greg L. reviewed the outline he prepared for RCC’s review and assessment of the town’s agricultural policies and programs in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan update. The overall goal of RCC’s involvement is to ensure the updated CP supports community based agriculture and farming. Greg L. reviewed objectives that would ensure sustainable agriculture. Andy W. suggested that agricultural policies and programs complement the town’s wildlife resource goals where feasible. Greg L. recommended that a small focus group (2-3 people) work on this effort. Jerry B. suggested that farmer’s convene to identify issues on this topic; Greg L. will follow up. Ideas mentioned during discussion included tax abatements for farmers, attracting Amish farmers to town (similar to the community in Whitefield), and adopting Food Sovereignty Ordinances (under the Food Sovereignty law, 2017), currently adopted by 73 municipalities in Maine. The Food Sovereignty Ordinances allow people to buy directly from farmers.

RCC will need to review other components of the CP (e.g., natural resources) during the update process.

Maine Farmland Trust – Jerry B. stated that MFT will not meet RCC for training purposes, but will be responsive to questions and requests for information as needed.

### **Old Business**

New Fields at the Fairgrounds Property – postponed until next meeting. Greg D. mentioned that the Recreation Committee has suggested holding a fishing derby to raise funds for the project. The town may have currently have an adequate number of fields at the high school to serve the existing demand.

Trail Signs, Torsey Pond Nature Preserve Signs – Jerry B. indicated that the trail signs will be ready in 1-2 weeks, though someone may need to pick them up in Warren at the prison facility.

Comprehensive Plan Update – No meeting was held in February; next scheduled meeting on March 17. Greg D. said a draft of the mission statement was submitted and will be consolidated for review. Also, that there are opportunities for town committees to provide input to the CP draft. The next step is to gather information from the town census. Jerry B. suggested questions for citizen input that would be relevant to the RCC: Should the town raise money for land conservation? What would people want to use the land for? Greg L. indicated that the town currently owns about 1,000 acres of land. Bruce H. mentioned a monthly review of land conservation issues with respect to the CP update.

Town Forest Update – Jerry B. mentioned that market for wood products is picking up slightly. The 2021 harvest is scheduled for late summer/early fall. The road and trail repairs will be combined and done by the logging contractor, which will result in the town receiving less income from the harvest. A site visit was scheduled on April 8, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. for RCC members to scope the abundance of invasive honeysuckle on the previously harvested blocks.

Age Friendly Committee Grant, Fairgrounds Trails – Jerry B. said that Romaine (Cmte. lead) has not heard if the \$2,500 has been awarded; probably will be notified in April. There are other grant opportunities (e.g., Food Pantry grant) upcoming which could serve other Fairground needs (e.g., bluestone on the trails). Greg L. will contact Romaine about the Fairground and school trails.

Town Social Events – Greg L. indicated that different committees are interested in participating. RCC could lead a walk interpreting the history of the pulling stones and/or a nature walk at one of the conservation properties during late summer or fall.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.  
Submitted by Andy Walsh on April 12, 2021