

Readfield Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday November 9, 2021, 6:30 pm via Readfield Town Zoom

Approved at RCC meeting, December 14, 2021

Present: Jerry Bley, Stephanie Donaldson, Greg Durgin, Marty Hanish, Bruce Hunter

Excused: Andy Walsh, Brent West

Guest: Tim Sniffen

Meeting began about 6:35 pm

Agenda was reviewed.

Minutes of the October 12, 2021 meeting were reviewed and approved with no changes.

New Business:

Financing Trail Repairs at Fairgrounds –

Maranacook C. School students and Trails Comm. volunteers started trail resurfacing this fall. It would be timely to complete work before winter. Cost to date (Cushing delivery) is \$110. Additional delivery will be over \$400. Expense of labor and equipment will be in addition.

Jerry B reported that OBT Trail Co may be available during November. They have the experience and equipment to do the work well. Cost would be around \$1000/day. The RCC budgeted for its share of this work but will not have funds available until after the upcoming Town Forest timber harvest. Trails Committee may have limited funds to contribute.

Jerry B will discuss with Eric Dyer Town Manager. It is hoped the Town may be able to assist.

Old Business:

Meeting Procedures –

New Town policy is for minutes to be submitted more quickly to improve communication. After discussion, we agreed to do our best.

Agendas will be sent to Town Manager before meetings.

Bruce H will make sure Town Calendar is up to date for RCC meetings.

Protection of Grassland Habitat on School and Town Property –

We would like to encourage growth and management of pollinator plants such as milkweed and goldenrod wherever possible. Greg D has talked with Shaun Drinkwater (school building and grounds manager). Currently school-owned grass fields are cut once a year by a local mower. Greg will try to give Bruce H the mower's name so that we can request late season cutting to benefit pollinators. The Town landfill (now closed) was also discussed as a potential grassland site.

Review of Fairgrounds Workshop held Nov. 1 –

In summary, it was felt the RCC presented the Fairgrounds Management Plan objectively. It appeared that general Town consensus is to move forward on the girls' softball field. The exact process to be followed was not discussed at the workshop.

RCC had various questions looking back at the workshop:

Will entire Fairgrounds field be developed as a sports complex? Will part of the field area be preserved?

Will the Management Plan be followed with due diligence?

Can the Town develop other fields as substitute pollinator habitats, especially for monarch butterflies? (Note: Monarch butterflies were not endangered when the Management Plan was written.)

Shall we ask Laura Lecker of the Somerset County Soil and Water Conservation District to evaluate other potential parcels?

Could we plant border areas of the Fairgrounds with pollinator plants?

Will the construction of the ball field(s) be a Town Warrant item?

Ongoing discussion of the Fairgrounds seems important. Jerry B suggested the different interests in the Fairgrounds meet and discuss their ideas. It was noted that planning is needed to minimize collateral damage, such as to the trail system.

Who should organize this meeting? It was felt the RCC should let others take the lead here. The issue may benefit from time, allowing the questions to settle and develop gradually.

Town Forest –

Hunting blind/stand issue: Bruce H had a report of an unregistered tree stand in the Town Forest. Jerry B will check on Sunday. If stand is still there, he will leave a note for the owner to either remove the stand or register it with the Town.

Timber harvest: Jerry will check with forester Harold Burnett re status.

Fairgrounds Trail Weed Removal –

Steve Hayes has sprayed the trails and around the parking lot with bio-friendly eradicant. Our appreciation goes to Steve.

Other Agenda Items –

Referred to future meetings

Meeting adjourned around 8:15 pm.

Submitted by Tim Sniffen, Dec. 15, 2021