

Readfield Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, April 14, 2022

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

Guests: Tim Sniffen, Bob Mohlar

RCC Meeting Minutes – Bruce H. motioned to approve the March 8, 2022 RCC meeting minutes; seconded by Jerry B.

**New Business**

Proposed Pollinator Garden, Fairgrounds Property (FG) – Jerry B. recommended that the pollinator garden be budgeted into the overall FG project (Community Park and Conservation Project) and to create the garden when the ballfield/multi-use courts are being constructed. Approximately \$5,000 is currently budgeted for the pollinator garden. Stephanie D. and others expressed interest in helping to develop the garden. It is anticipated that the pollinator garden will be a community effort, both in selecting/maintaining the native plantings and garden infrastructure (walkway, fencing, etc.). The Age Friendly Community Committee and/or Maranacook School may have interest in participating in garden design and upkeep. Marty H. suggested that access to the pollinator garden be designed with older community members in mind. Tim S. mentioned that a water source will be needed and that a proposed well may be located near the new ballfield access road. Electricity will be extended to the ballfield, though the purpose isn't clear (lighting?). Andy W. mentioned that the remaining meadow/fields on the FG also support pollinators and management to sustain this resource should continue.

Given the loss of some valuable natural resources on the FG property, Bruce H. recommended that RCC request a formal statement that the remaining natural resources on the property will be protected and maintained for conservation purposes (i.e., no further development). Marty H. recommends a long range plan for the FG. Greg D. mentioned that Shawn Keegan (SB member) suggested that a committee be formed when the project is finished to update the FG management plan. Jerry B. recommended that RCC request a statement from the Selectboard and Recreation Board by mid-May that the remainder of the fields be reserved as habitat (or lose RCC support for the project). Marty H. indicated that based on current cost estimates, every household in town will pay \$20/year to finance the bond for the project. Marty H. will get an update on project costs and the plan for managing the recreation facilities at the next Budget Committee meeting.

RS Leonard (design contractor) will issue a revised plan on April 17 and will schedule an on-site meeting next week. Andy W. mentioned some items to ask about, including the extent of forest alteration around the proposed multi-use courts/concession building, identifying all wetland resources on the concept plan,

and providing details of wetland alteration around #8 on the plan. Details regarding the concession stand are also pending.

Town Bird Walk – A bird walk is scheduled for May 7, 2022 from 7:00-9:00 a.m. Tim S. and other leaders will meet with participants at the Fairgrounds parking lot. Depending on the number that show up, the group will divide up and go to various locations in town (Torsey Pond, Rosmarin-Saunders Preserve, Fairgrounds). Notices for the bird walk will be placed in the May issue of the Messenger, Town library, Town website, Town Hall, etc.

## **Old Business**

Town Forest Harvest Update – The town received a \$10,502.70 partial payment from the recent tree harvest.

Vernal Pool Special Area Management Program - Aram Calhoun (UMaine professor) will give a brief refresher on vernal pools followed by a presentation on the Maine vernal pool Special Area Management Plan (SAMP). SAMP is an alternative mitigation tool for vernal pools impacted by development. Jerry B. recommended inviting Planning Board members.

Sludge Spreading/PFAS – discussion deferred for future meeting.

Comprehensive Plans Open Space/Conservation Sections – Bruce H. will contact Jessica Gorton (Planning Cmte.) regarding an update on the 2021-22 Comprehensive plan revision relative to the open space and conservation sections. Bruce H. will send out available chapters for review.

Grasslands management – Bruce H. indicated that Laura Lecker (Technical Director, Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation District) can visit select town properties with field habitat (Maranacook School, landfill property, field adjacent to FG) to advise RCC regarding management for pollinators and other wildlife.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Submitted by Andy Walsh on Nov. 6, 2022