

Readfield Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 14, 2022

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

RCC Member Status – Greg D. and Marty H. were re-appointed to the Conservation Commission by the Select Board.

Old Business

Vernal Pool Project – Bruce H. will wrap up the loose ends related to this project, including identifying vernal pools meeting the state criteria for “significance.” Jerry B. suggested that natural vernal pools should be differentiated from non-natural vernal pools. Only property number will be identified, not ownership. Jerry B. will ask Aram Calhoun (UMaine) if someone at UMaine can produce a GIS map showing the location and status of the mapped vernal pools.

Pollinator Garden, Fairgrounds Property – Stephanie D. will continue to work on this project. Jerry B. recommended scheduling a discussion of the pollinator garden (PG) to sort out details. Funds should be made available if the ballfield project goes forward in the future; if not, RCC will have to obtain funding for the PG. Marty H. expressed concern about future expansion of the parking lot (e.g., Heritage Days) and how it might affect the PG. Bruce H. plans to visit the PG at the headquarters of the Mahoosuc Land Trust in Bethel.

Town Forest Harvest Update – A partial payment of \$10,502.70 was submitted to the town from recent tree harvesting activities. Bruce H. contacted Theresa Shaw (Finance Officer) regarding an update.

Jerry B. informed Harold Burnett (Town Forester) that the road and trail repair work needs to be completed by the end of the fiscal year (per Eric D.’s guidance). However, completion on the work by FY’s end is complicated by nesting goshawks at the TF near the Center Lane trail. Jerry B. identified two options: 1) Town writes a check to Two Trees Forestry (TTF) for the work and TTF puts it in escrow until the work is done later in the season; or 2) Have a contractor do access road repairs and improvements and haul gravel for the Center Lane trail and dump it at the homestead. After the goshawks have departed, RCC can use either a volunteer or paid tractor operator to lay down the gravel on the trail where needed. Marty H. expressed concern regarding paying the contractor after the FY ends for work completed within the current FY. Marty H. will defer to Theresa on this issue. Bruce H. moved to adopt option 2, which would complete the road repairs before the end of the FY and dump gravel at the homestead/complete after the goshawks finish nesting. Approved by Bruce H, Jerry B., Andy W., Marty H.; Stephanie D. and Greg D. absent, and Tim S. abstained.

Sludge Spreading Map – The map of sludge spreading sites identifies those hayfields/properties where licenses were granted to spread sludge, though it is not certain that sludge was spread at any given location. The mapping of these sites is a work in progress.

Long Range Plan for RCC – Members briefly discussed the future role of the RCC. Marty H. (?) suggested that the RCC expand its role in educating the public regarding the importance of the town's natural resources. Marty is concerned that natural resource conservation may not be important to people (e.g., that the FG property is "just an empty lot"). Andy W. mentioned the Maine Master Naturalist program which requires graduates of the program to volunteer 20 hours teaching others. A MMNP graduate would likely be well suited to help implement an education program for the town.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Submitted by Andy Walsh on Nov. 6, 2022