

Readfield Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 8, 2022

Present: Bruce Hunter, Jerry Bley, Jaaron Shaw, Greg Durgin, Marty Hanish, Linnea Koons (new member), Andy Walsh
Absent: Stephanie Donaldson

New Member – Welcomed Linnea Koons as RCC's newest member.

Meeting minutes – The Oct. 11, 2022 meeting minutes were approved with a couple of minor revisions. Marty H. and Linnea Koons abstained.

RCC Budget – RCC members discussed budget needs for FY 2023-24.

Old Business

Comprehensive Plan – Greg D. followed up on the draft Comp Plan that indicates the Recreation, Trails, and Conservation Committees will be combined and that the town would hire staff to assist the group. Jerry B. responded in writing (following RCC member comments) to the proposed recreation policies on behalf of the RCC. Marty H. is in favor of periodic meetings among the committees to update volunteers on issues and actions taken.

Torsey Pond N. P. – Bruce H. received a call from Cliff Buuck regarding an inquiry asking if hunting is allowed at TPNP. To help secure TPNP, the property boundaries need to be signed (no hunting except waterfowl hunting from pond) every 100 ft. Ethan Buuck called to assist putting up signs; Bruce H. will respond.

Fairground Property – Bruce H. sent a copy of the Fairgrounds mowing plan to Eric Dyer (TM). RCC had previously met with Anna Carll (former town maintenance staff) to discuss a proposed mowing schedule at the Fairgrounds to protect grassland habitat and pollinators. Anna agreed to the mowing guidelines and RCC wrote a plan for implementation. The mowing plan was submitted to Eric D. on Nov. 7, 2022 and will be circulated to Selectboard members and discussed at the next SB meeting on Nov. 14. Andy W. will attend to answer questions.

The on-site meeting with Eric Doucette to discuss grassland management at the Fairgrounds is postponed until next spring and will be combined with discussion of ballfield development. Bruce H. suggests that we discuss RCC's role/process for managing the Fairgrounds (not including details of ballfield proposal) and its relationship with other committees. For example, will the Fairgrounds Management Plan be the guidance document for moving forward with property management?

Town Forest – Jerry B. informed the RCC that the 300-acre Draper property was purchased by Longroad Energy for mitigation (solar project). The land will be transferred (with deed restrictions) to New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) by

the end of the year, thereby contributing to an approximately 1,000-acre block of protected land in Readfield and Wayne. NEFF will develop a forest management plan for the property.

Long Range Planning – Bruce H. would like RCC to identify how town conservation properties should be managed and what our role will be in overseeing these properties over the next 10 years.

Marty H. voiced concern regarding the 730-acre Carleton Pond property, owned and managed by Greater Augusta Utility District (GAUD). Currently a back-up water supply, the property's conservation future is unclear. Jerry B. would like to see permanent protection and may contact Brian Tarbuck (General Manager) for an update. Marty H. mentioned the town's land acquisition and open space accounts that could be tapped to purchase a conservation easement. Working with KLT to facilitate permanent protection through fee ownership may also be an option.

Long range planning may also entail identifying conservation opportunities on all public and private lands in town (e.g., old landfill, Kents Hill School properties) and what town properties may be suitable for active recreation. Marty H. suggested that RCC partner with KLT to help facilitate conservation in town.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Submitted by Andy Walsh on November 6, 2022