

Readfield Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, January 10, 2023

Present: Bruce Hunter, Jerry Bley, Jaaron Shaw, Greg Durgin, Marty Hanish, Linnea Koons, Andy Walsh

Absent: Stephanie Donaldson

Guests: Howard Lake, Ethan Buuck (MDIFW Game Warden), Rob Peale (Trails Cmte)

### **New Business**

Ethan Buuck, No Hunting Signs at Torsey Pond N.P. – Due to the increased number of inquiries regarding hunting access at TPNP, Bruce H. invited Ethan Buuck (Game Warden, MDIFW) to discuss the proper placement of “no hunting” signs at the preserve. Hunting is not allowed TPNP (except for waterfowl hunting from the pond), and a single “no hunting” sign is posted at the trailhead. Mr. Buuck indicated that signage at TPNP is currently not posted according to the law. Where hunting is not allowed on a property, it must be properly posted or a legal case will not hold up in court. Mr. Buuck indicated two options for posting are available:

- 1) Paint Markings - marking trees with a single, purple vertical stripe at intervals of 50-75 ft. (possibly up to 100 ft.) around the property margin. The vertical stripe is recognized by hunters to indicate that hunting is not allowed.
- 2) No Hunting signs - posting signs every 300 ft. around the property margin.

Mr. Buuck indicated that vertical stripes at intervals with signs spaced more widely apart is okay too. Since state law can't enforce town ordinances, the local game warden also needs a signed document from the town declaring that hunting is not allowed on the property (copy to MDIFW Sidney office). The game warden can only enforce the hunting prohibition if there's an enforcement measure in place. Linnea K. mentioned that aluminum, black and yellow no hunting signs can be purchased at Walmart.

Open Space Planning, Winthrop – Howard Lake informed the RCC that Jill Ippoliti (Winthrop Conservation Commission) has suggested that neighboring towns (including Readfield) consider regional open space (OS) planning to improve the conservation of regional lands. Kennebec Land Trust currently has a strategic conservation plan that ranks properties for potential future conservation based on attributes (e.g., lakeshore, unfragmented forest, scenic values, etc.). However, KLT may lack some local knowledge of potential conservation opportunities that could make a regional approach valuable. Readfield and Manchester are currently the only towns in the immediate area with open space plans.

Jaaron S. stated that Readfield should execute its own open space plan (OSP) before engaging in a regional OS planning effort. He indicated that the town has not reached out to property owners regarding conservation. Jerry B. mentioned that

Readfield has conserved at least 4 properties since the 2006 Readfield OSP was written. Marty H. stated that the town needs to demonstrate their commitment to OS before considering regional OS planning. A regional approach may identify gaps in land conservation.

No consensus was reached on whether Readfield would consider a regional approach to open space planning.

Fairgrounds Working Group – Jerry B. (RCC) and Steve DeAngelis (Selectboard member) will moderate monthly meetings of the Fairgrounds Working Group, which will be tasked with coming up with a plan for the field area at the Fairgrounds. The purpose is to start with a clean slate and utilize the decision-making process in the Fairgrounds Management Plan. The first meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2023, at 6:30 (town hall). Trails, Recreation, and Conservation Committees will be asked to send two representatives each; a Selectboard member will also attend. The services of a professional planner will be utilized when needed.

Up to one-half of the funding may come from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, whose application deadline is the end of June. A warrant article will be placed on the ballot for the town to consider the proposed development concept and whether to accept the funds (if awarded). Assuming no taxpayer appropriation. Greg D. stated that the Selectboard needs to have better communication with the School Cmte. regarding the proposed ballfield options. Marty H. mentioned the many planning issues happening concurrently (Comp Plan, review of town OSP, planning for recreation facilities) and recommended that all sides of the FG's development assessment be considered (including the habitat value of the FG property).

Chaga Culture – Due to the extended discussions regarding several issues, RCC ran out of time for Linnea K. to discuss the chaga proposal. Linnea agreed to disseminate information to RCC by email.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by Andy Walsh on February 12, 2023