

Readfield Conservation Commission Minutes  
Tuesday, August 11, 2015, 6:30 pm, Town Office

Members present: David Bagley, Jerry Bley, Greg Durgin, Martin Hanish, Bruce Hunter, Bob Mohlar, Tim Sniffen  
Not present: Beth Pritchard, Andy Walsh  
Visiting: Robert Bittar

Chair Bruce Hunter opened meeting around 6:30 p.m., welcoming new members Greg Durgin and Marty Hanish.

### **Old Business**

Proposed Factory Square Dam Project – possible area improvements in cooperation with abutter Bob Bittar

Today's scheduled site visit to the Factory Square Dam (FSD) was cancelled due to rain, as was Jerry's appointment with architect Andy Dube.

Earlier this month, members of the RCC and Bob Bittar had visited the restored Monmouth dam owned by Chuck and Ginger Hillier, a possible model for what could be done in Readfield. Jerry briefly reviewed the Hillier's work, which has created an attractive area there. Readfield's FSD is a scenic historic resource with similar possibilities.

Considerable discussion was led by Bob Bittar, owner of the adjacent old mill house which he is restoring to be a possible site for music or other entertainment. His vision for the area is summed up in the May RCC minutes. He is hoping the RCC will support him with work on the Town-owned FSD parcel, and he offers financial assistance. Bob reported that his neighbor Roland Cote has agreed to allow paths through his land between Mill Stream Rd, Route 17, and the stream itself.

Jerry reported that Andy Dube has offered to do some designing.

The Trails Committee is unable to take the lead on this project, so that would fall to the RCC.

When asked about submitting a plan to Maine Dept of Environmental Protection for approval, Bob reported that DEP needs to see a plan only if the work involves the actual stream bed itself.

Some RCC members felt that we need to have a clearer design plan before we can determine what approvals are necessary.

At this point RCC responsibility appears to include: 1. Coming to understand or assist in creating the design. 2. Getting Select Board approval to proceed. 3. Overseeing or doing the work involved in the plan.

Next step will be a rescheduled site visit to be held Monday, August 24, 5:30 pm, at the dam site. Jerry will invite architect Andy Dube to the site visit.

#### Budget review –

Expected spending was completed in June for previous fiscal year.

Under current year (2015-16) budget, we have spent \$255.80 on materials to replace the Town Forest footbridge near the Macdonald property. KLT interns and Camp Vega campers did the work in early July. Tim will write thank-you's to Jean-Luc Theriault, KLT, and to the directors of Camp Vega. Also we will try to get an article into the Messenger.

#### Readfield Corners Map and Signage on Trails –

Jerry reported that the revised map of the Readfield Corners area trails has been completed and posted in kiosks, and the new signs have been installed. Positive feedback has been received.

#### Joint Conservation Commission Meeting with Wayne and Manchester –

Referred to Sept mtg. General feeling was that the joint mtg should be more than just a social gathering, and should have some focus.

#### Associate RCC Member -

RCC now has only one opening for an associate/alternate member. It was moved and passed unanimously that we change the title "Associate" to "Alternate".

#### Historical Markers –

Apparently Dale Potter-Clark has begun raising funds for erecting markers around town. We are not clear what support she may want from the RCC. Bruce will check with her. Referred to Sept. mtg.

#### Fairgrounds Items –

Governance Agreement: At our June mtg we felt that the agreement needs to clearly outline the roles of the different committees involved. Bruce will resubmit the draft agreement to us for comments or approval at Sept. mtg.

New Gate: Installation is complete and gate is painted, probably thanks to Tom Donegan and Lenny Reay, others.

Gate Lock: It was suggested we purchase a good quality combination padlock to secure gate. Combination should be shared with all committee heads and Town Office staff. Tim to purchase lock.

Snow Fence: Removal was recommended. Greg Durgin to check on these items with David Erb of the Ballfield Committee.

#### Torsey Pond Nature Preserve:

Site visit to assess repair needs, esp. bog bridging, will be Sunday 8/23, 8:30 a.m. A fall workday will be scheduled at our Sept mtg.

We will also check the ATV damage to the entrance trail which occurred in July, ask Teresa Shaw (Acting Town Manager) if there is any report from the Game Warden's investigation. Note: Since this mtg, we have learned that a summons has been issued to an ATV operator.

#### Fairgrounds Mowing:

One mowing was completed early this summer. Jerry will check on another with Mark Birtwell. We have funds in the current budget which could go toward mowing.

#### Town Beach:

We discussed the Recreation Committee's request that we consider taking over running the Readfield Town Beach. We do not know exactly what is involved, but do not think we will be able to do this. We raised the question of using RCC funds to hire a part-time manager. Bruce will ask Tom Donegan for a description of the beach duties, or invite him to a RCC meeting to discuss the question further.

#### Additional Town Property Concerns:

Erosion near TPNP: The Torsey Pond Association is concerned about runoff moving from the Kents Hill Belle Vue Farm onto KLT's Echo Watershed property and downstream to the lake. The RCC suggests that the association check further with KLT or with the Readfield Code Enforcement Officer if they have continued concerns. Tim will relay this suggestion to Keith Coulling, TP Assoc. Chair.

Fogg Farm Conservation Area: There was a question about whether the Trails Committee has installed the waterbars on the new trail, using funds in our budget. Tim will check with Trails Comm.

#### Fairgrounds:

Macdougald Trail erosion – Jerry reported that the recently-dug ditch which parallels the trail is a problem. Larry Perkins (engineer) has recommended re-working the ditch to be a wider swale, and installing vegetation mats or fabric to prevent washouts. The Trails Comm is asking us for repair funding. Jerry will ask for design, materials list, expense estimate.

Loam Pile – Gary Keilty has said it is to be stored on Fairgrounds property, but storage location is not clear. RCC feels it should not be moved into wetland areas. Jerry will ask Gary for more details before Sept. mtg.

### **New Business**

#### Belle Vue Farm –

The Belle Vue property which was the former Mace farm (104 acre parcel across from Jesse Lee Church) is for sale. This is an iconic part of Readfield's open space, and is highlighted in the Readfield Open Space Plan as providing a very valuable view as well as being an important piece of our rural history.

Jerry has informed the Maine Farmland Trust of the proposed sale. MFT has met with the realtor and with one potential buyer, and will look into acquiring an agricultural easement in cooperation with the buyer. RCC may be asked to assist with organization, fundraising for purchase of the easement, raising public awareness and interest.

The following resolution was proposed and adopted unanimously: "The Readfield Conservation Commission supports the Maine Farmland Trust's efforts to establish an agricultural easement or other arrangement to protect and conserve the Belle Vue Farm as open space, and to preserve the agricultural use of this farmland."

It was suggested that Bruce inform historian Dale Potter-Clark of our interest in this historic property.

Readfield Water District Property:

Trails Committee is looking into placing a new trail on the water district parcel across from the Fairgrounds entrance on Church Rd. to be linked in with the Fairgrounds trail system. Bruce raised concern about possible spills or other damage to the water supply if the public is using this property. Warning signs were suggested.

Meeting adjourned at approx 9:00 p.m.

Submitted by Tim Sniffen, substitute Secretary  
August 19, 2015