

Readfield Conservation Commission Minutes
August 9, 2016, 6:30 pm, Town Office
Approved Sept 13, 2016

Present: Jerry Bley, Greg Durgin, Bruce Hunter, Martin Hanish, Bob Mohlar, Tim Sniffen

Not present: Beth Pritchard, Andy Walsh

June minutes were reviewed and approved as amended. The RCC did not meet during July.

NEW BUSINESS

Ball Park naming:

Greg reported on discussions with former members of the Ball Field Committee and with Select Board members about naming the Fairgrounds ball field. Because of the Keene family's long-time involvement with the Town and their major financial help with the ball field construction, there is general support for recognizing them in the naming. The RCC concurs in this sentiment. "Keene Community Field" has been suggested. There was some discussion of asking the family their preference.

Jerry suggested: 1) The naming proposal should come from the Recreation Committee with RCC support. 2) We also urge the Rec Comm to consider a way of recognizing Lenny Reay and family who made an exceptional effort in building the field.

Greg will follow through on this with Tom Donegan of the Rec Comm.

Greg reported briefly on the successful August 5 meeting of Town Manager and other Town leaders with seasonal residents.

Fall School Community Service Days:

Greg reported that the Maranacook Community School workday will be in September and the Kents Hill School workday will be in October, and asked if we have projects to offer. We discussed possible projects but did not arrive at a practical choice for the MCS day which would need to 'employ' 12 to 15 students for about 5 hours.

We will discuss the October workday with KHS at our Sept meeting. KHS student groups can be smaller, thus fitting into more possible jobs.

From the last Trails Committee Meeting:

Greg reported that there have been questions about the policy for the funds in the Readfield Conservation Lands Account (Town Forest harvest receipts), and their role in the RCC and TC budgets. There was a suggestion of a special Town gathering to discuss this. The RCC feels that if this is necessary, it could be better done at a regular Select Board meeting, and the agenda could be publicized in advance. Greg will report this back to the Trails Comm.

OLD BUSINESS

Vernal Pool Inventory:

Jerry reported that his daughter Amy has begun working on the database.

Town Properties:

Torsey Pond Nature Preserve –

There has been no recent damage in the parking area. The kiosk is upright and secure against a large tree. Jerry and Greg mounted new signs higher out of reach to deter tampering. When it appears that repeat vandalism is unlikely, we will consider installing one of the standard “Trail” signs near the highway.

Surveillance camera – Greg will talk to Town Manager Eric Dyer about requesting parking lot surveillance from the Warden Service when they have a camera available.

Bridge replacement (a major capital project at TPNP plus other properties) - Jerry reported that the Maine Conservation Corps is not our only option for assistance in replacing several bridges. Other possible companies include Caribou Trails Development Co. (Bethel), Appalachian Trails Club, and another company in Turner. Jerry will ask these organizations what they can offer, and how to proceed with seeking bids before the budgeting cycle for the next fiscal year.

Recreational Trails Grants may not be available for this type of repair/replacement work. Also their Sept. 30 deadline is too soon for us to apply.

Milt Wright, KLT steward, reported more broken planks in footbridges. Tim will check and try to repair. There has been no report on applying non-skid grit to bridging.

Readfield Fairgrounds –

The loam pile left from the parking lot construction is being used by the Town in various locations (cemetery, Town Office lot), and is about half gone.

Access road – Bruce Chandler, Town Maintenance, expects to plan and finish the road improvement by late summer/early fall.

The Trails Committee has moved crushed stone to the Lower Fgnds Trail for filling low areas.

Greg will check with Eric or Bruce C about the annual mowing of the Fairgrounds meadow. (If convenient, after goldenrod has finished blooming, in the interest of insect conservation.)

There was discussion of plantings in the gap behind the ball field back stop and other locations. No conclusions.

Readfield Town Farm Forest –

Road/trail repair – We have discussed adding gravel fill this season to low stretches of the ‘Center Lane’ and other low areas with Eric and Bruce C. Jerry will check with Eric.

We need to plan for mowing/bush-hogging the farmstead clearing this season. Greg will check with the Town Office, and if the Town does not want to do it, will ask David Buker for a bid.

Tim will find out whether trail-closure signs are still needed, and arrange for removal if appropriate.

The Stehle property (about 150 acres abutting the TF to the south) is for sale. Jerry and Bob will consider possible ways to encourage preservation of this wooded and agricultural parcel.

Fogg Farm Conservation Area –

Jerry reported that a small walkway near the first footbridge has collapsed. He moved it away from the trail to prevent injury.

Replacement of the large footbridge will be part of our major capital improvement project for next fiscal year.

Mill Stream Dam (Factory Square) Area –

The Elsie Viles Foundation will not be able to give us a grant to help stabilize the old dam structure. Other funding sources may include the Field Pond Assoc. (Mass.) or possibly Kennebec Savings Bank.

The Town has approx. \$2700 on hand from this spring’s fundraiser at the Emporium, but needs an additional \$3500 to start work. Also a DEP application needs to be completed. Jerry continues to work on this. (Thank you, J.)

Railings and other improvements will be needed later.

The formal meeting adjourned around 8:15 pm.

Submitted by Tim Sniffen, acting secretary.

August 19, 2016