

Readfield Conservation Commission Minutes

March 20, 2017, 6:30 p.m., Town Office

Present: Bruce Hunter, Tim Sniffen, Greg Durgin, Martin Hanish, Jerry Bley, Brent West, Bob Mohlar, and Andy Walsh

Guest: Annie Reiter

Meeting Minutes – A motion was made and seconded by Readfield Conservation Commission (RCC) members to approve the February 14, 2017 RCC meeting minutes.

New Business

Annie Reiter of the Manchester Conservation Commission attended the meeting to discuss the potential for collaboration with RCC. The Town of Manchester identified farmland protection as an action item in their Comprehensive Plan, which was updated in 2011. With existing farms at risk with changing ownership, Manchester would like to attract more young farmers to the area to continue farming existing agricultural land. Since towns in the area have collaborated on other conservation projects (e.g., vernal pool identification), Ms. Reiter was interested in determining whether Readfield has interest in joining this effort. Members discussed how to attract more young farmers to the area; e.g., a joint forum with Maine Farmland Trust and surrounding communities to discuss how to recruit farmers to the area. Manchester previously held a “Farmer’s Appreciation Night,” but attendance was low. But a larger event involving other towns may attract more interest.

Ms. Reiter was also interested in hearing about Readfield’s vernal pool identification project. Jerry B. and Tim S. provided an overview of effort involved in completing the project, including the challenges and pitfalls. Jerry B. and Tim S. agreed to discuss the vernal pool project at the next Manchester Conservation Commission meeting on April 6.

Old Business

Trail Infrastructure Replacement Project – RCC members reviewed Steve Spencer’s Trail Infrastructure report on the specifications and estimated costs for three footbridges, bog bridging, and a viewing platform at Torsey Pond Nature Preserve and Fogg Farm Preserve. The timeline and match needed for the joint RCC/RTP Recreational Trail Program grant application to be submitted in September 2017 was discussed. RCC members agreed that more information concerning the proposed “ditch and drain” replacement of existing bog bridging will be needed before RCC agrees to this work item. Tim S. suggested that RCC members conduct an onsite visit to see the locations of all the proposed work items. The onsite visit was scheduled for April 11, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. RCC will also check with Maine DEP to determine whether permits are needed for the proposed

infrastructure improvements. In addition, RCC will contact the Kennebec Land Trust, who holds the conservation easement on Torsey Pond N.P., to determine if activities associated with the project (e.g., soil disturbance, tree cutting, etc.) are allowed under the terms of the easement. Jerry B. agreed to contact Jean Luc Theriault, KLT Stewardship Dir., regarding the conservation easement.

Kents Hill School Workday – A KHS workday is scheduled for April 14, 2017. The Readfield Trail Committee will use KHS students to build a spur trail around the parking lot at the Fairgrounds. Some students may also work on the trail at the Union Meetinghouse.

Greg D. announced that the Select Board voted 3-2 to approve naming the ballfield at the Fairgrounds Property “Keene Memorial Park.”

Meeting adjourned approx. 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by Andy Walsh (Secretary)