

Town of Readfield

Boards, Committees & Commissions

Approved Meeting Minutes

- Age Friendly Committee March 8, 2023
- Budget Committee March 8, 2023
- Comprehensive Planning Committee March 29, 2023
- Conservation Commission October 11, 2022
- Conservation Commission November 8, 2022
- Conservation Commission December 13, 2022
- Conservation Commission January 10, 2023
- Conservation Commission February 14, 2023

Age Friendly Committee March 8, 2023 Minutes

Approved 4-12-2023

Present: Steve DeAngelis, Ed Dodge, Eric Dyer, Maggie Edmondson, Eric Johnson, Elaine Katz, Marianne Perry

Guest: Deb Carey

- Approved Minutes of Feb 8, 2023

Old Business:

- **Update on Readfield U** – Maggie reported on the fantastic attendance numbers. Many people are walk -ins in addition to signing up. Lots of new people who did not sign up the last time Readfield U was offered. Some events are full. We will continue to distribute flyers and AFC committee members will try to attend to do introductions and take pictures. Eric J. floated the idea of organizing some version of Readfield U during the summer months. There was great enthusiasm for trying a scaled back version where different committees of the town host an event.
- **Update on State-wide Age Friendly Meeting** – AF groups from all over the state come to share ideas and resources. Meeting will take place May 4 from 1 – 3, Location to be determined. People will keep it in mind to attend depending on where it is held.
- **Update on preparing the Readfield Progress Report for the State AFC program.** – Eric D. and Romaine attended the zoom workshop. We will meet with Romaine on April 19 at 9 am to continue work on this project.
- **Update on NDN** – Elaine reported back that things are moving forward nicely. Now that Readfield is part of the program we need volunteers to join the different NDN committees such as – Fundraising, Outreach, Events. Also, sometime in June we hope to have a Kick Off event.
- **Updates on Senior Café** – There were 10 participants this week who enjoyed a student presentation of a science project. Senior Café will continue to meet every Tuesday from 9 - 11 for continuity even though the numbers may vary. Everyone involved is enthusiastic about keeping it going until the school year ends. We tossed around ideas on how to keep something like this going and the suggestion was made that perhaps AFC can work with Melissa to keep this going outside the library during the summer months.
- **Update on Comprehensive Plan** – Elaine reported back that what started out as a subcommittee the Fairgrounds Working Groups has now become a regular committee. At the last meeting on March 2, there was consensus to move forward with the basic plan to create the softball field, preserve as much conservation land, and improve accessibility to the bathrooms and footpaths.
- **Update on Handy Helper brochure** – Using the most recently modified list of resources that Elaine circulated, the committee continued to make revisions.

Elaine will make these changes and circulate the new version so that if there is approval, it can be sent to Kristin for a mock -up that we can review at our April meeting.

New Business:

- **Eric D** – presented the idea of creating a kayak launch at the beach that will make it easier to get in and out of the kayaks and also limit erosion. He also updated us on changes to the Beach Pass Application. All Readfield residents have free access to the beach once they sign up for a Pass. Passes will now include grandchildren so as not to be counted separately. Non-residents will be required to fill out the application and pay the appropriate fee.
- **Election Day Table** – the committee agreed that it is always a great opportunity to present ourselves to the community on election days so we will set a schedule for volunteers to cover the table at the June 14 Election.
- **A New Member** – We were delighted to have Deb Carey join us and hope that she will become our newest AFC member.

Meeting Adjourned – 10:30 am

Next meeting: April 12, 2023

Respectfully submitted, Elaine

Readfield Budget Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, March 8, 2023 – *Approved*

Present: Andy Tolman (Chair), Chris Sammons, Marty Hanish, Ed Sims, Eric Dyer (Town Manager), Teresa Shaw (Finance Officer), Anjelica Pittman (Board Secretary), Carol Doorenbos, Mike (via Zoom)

Excused Absent: Ellen Schneider

Call to Order

Communications - 10 min.

- Budget Committee Comments – Marty commented about the Fairgrounds Working Group, he said that Jerry Bley and Steve DeAngelis are doing a great job getting everyone on the same page and organized, the two main interests are a softball field and pollinator gardens. Currently, the Fairgrounds Working Group is planning on using fundraising and grant money to fund the future projects, however Marty was curious if there was money in the proposed budget for a grant writer or if there would need to be an article for the Town Warrant for grant writing. Eric said that would be under the admin line, and he will look into it.
- Town Staff Reporting - Report given by Eric
- Public Comment - none

Review of Prior Meeting Minutes - 5 min.

Meeting Minutes of February 15, 2023

- Chris motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Ed seconded, **3-0 vote** in favor

Budget Review & Presentations - 70 min.

- Eric briefed the board on current budget draft revisions (located in the packet). The board discussed the revaluation that will occur over the next four years, financing for the firetruck, how much reserves to put towards the budget to lessen the tax impact on residents and concluded that they would take another look once they see the RSU budget and how that will impact taxpayers. Eric mentioned important upcoming dates for the budget process as follows:
 - March 13 – Select Board Meeting
 - March 15 – RSU Meeting with Select Boards
 - March 17 – legal review
 - March 22 – Public Budget Meeting/Hearing
 - April 10 – Select Board Final Budget and Warrant review and approval
- Also discussed looking into a new bank as well as options for investment to get the best return. An RFP will be issued for banking services. Improvements at the beach would come from the operating budget. The library parking lot and upstairs work is budgeted for this FY but Eric is not optimistic he will get any bids as he reached out to 20 contractors and none of them bid, the Town maintenance department may have to complete that work.
- Waiting for bids for the Fire Department sprinkler system.
- The Church Road sidewalk project is in the budget and is on an 80/20 plan with the federal government. The town will pay 20% of the sidewalk costs.

Other Business - 5 min.

Readfield Budget Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, March 8, 2023 – *Approved*

- Motion made by Chris to adjourn at 8:10PM, seconded by Ed, vote 4-0 in favor.

Adjourn

Minutes submitted by Anjelica Pittman, Board Secretary

Comprehensive Planning Committee Minutes

March 29, 2023

Present: Jeffrey Carlson, Chris Cheney, Paula Clark, Jessica Cobb (KVCOG), Greg Durgin, Eric Dyer, Jessica Gorton, Elaine Katz, Matt Nazar, Dennis Price

Absent: Greg Leimbach

Jessica G. called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. in person at the Town Office and via Zoom.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Before the meeting Jessica C. sent the committee members a draft of the full plan for review, which Eric put on the website.

Eric reported that at a recent public hearing he made a presentation of the Comp Plan to about 10 people and received useful feedback.

There appears to be some misconceptions about how the Comp Plan relates to the broadband plan that voters rejected last year. Jessica G. searched for the words internet and broadband in the completed plan and found seven mentions, but nothing that matched the issues raised. The committee discussed how these misconceptions can be counteracted.

MINUTES

Paula moved that the minutes for March 15 be approved. Dennis seconded. Approved, with two abstentions due to absence.

Paula moved that the minutes for February 15 be approved, and Dennis seconded. Approved, with one abstention due to absence.

OLD BUSINESS

Future Land Use Chapter

Before the meeting Paula sent the committee a draft of the Future Land Use chapter she revised based on the original document Jessica C. had put together.

Paula went over her revisions with the committee. She said she changed some of the language and added text in other places. One major change is to consider the addition of a Rural Resource District. She noted that there is some overlap to the Existing Land Use chapter, and there are references to that chapter and others.

An error she found is that the old Comp Plan is referred to as 2008 in some places; it should be 2009. She said that everything suggested by the committee in previous meetings has been included.

Questions were raised about a few issues, such as growing cannabis as a light industrial. There is interest in that industry but no business currently pursuing it.

Paula asked Jessica C. re Articles 7 and 11, which says ambiguous language creates gray area about what is allowed. Committee discussed what it refers to and how to address.

Paula asked about the placement of goals and strategies, which will lead the chapter.

Eric asked Paula if anything in the chapter stood out as markedly different from the old plan or if anything is missing. She said no, and that she doesn't think anything has been left out.

Everyone thanked Paula for her work on this chapter, which is one of the most technical and important and took a great deal of time.

Matt asked when this chapter needs to be finalized. Eric said that on April 10 the Select Board will work on the draft plan, and any changes or corrections to Paula's draft should be completed by them. On April 19 the CPC will meet to hold a final review. The final proof needs to be ready on April 28 for the town warrant.

The committee discussed timing for final tasks. Matt, who is the second lead on the Future Land Use chapter, said he will read the chapter and get his feedback to Paula well before the 10th.

There was some discussion about open space and residents' attitude toward it. Eric said that there is a small group that feels we have enough, but mostly people are in favor of it.

Jessica G. asked committee members to read through the Future Land Use chapter and get their comments to Paula by April 5 so she can integrate them.

Matt asked if there is a map for this chapter. Jessica C. said yes, it was presented at the last public meeting. She said she will work on getting the maps into the draft before the Select Board meeting.

Final Draft Plan Review

Jessica C. presented the draft of the plan, stopping as she scrolled through the 259 pages to ask questions. There were some questions about the first plan, which was in 1993. The next plan was 2009.

Several people offered suggestions and corrections. Topics that had been discussed previously, such as the Fairgrounds project, funding options, recreation, critical natural resources and maps were discussed. It was decided to include the text of the survey and then provide a link to the survey results.

Survey Results

Eric reported that all the survey results are up on the website. He also created a summary of the comments and posted those as well. 169 long-form responses and 67 short-form responses were received, which is a little more than 12 percent of the population. There was a separate survey for businesses, which drew eight responses, mostly angry.

At the beginning of the long-form survey there were questions about where in town people lived, how long they have been here, how old they are, etc. Those answers reflected the fact that Readfield is a community that skews older and retired.

Eric said he is trying to compress the information for presentation slides, but he said he doesn't want to cut them too short because many residents have expressed interest in the survey results. Chris suggested that for transparency the business survey should be included as well.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Information and Education

Eric said it's important that we continue to provide a steady flow of information to counteract efforts to distort the purpose of the plan.

Members discussed the schedule of meetings and plans for moving ahead, and how best to give residents an opportunity to offer feedback. Eric suggested that the CPC's May 17 meeting be turned into a public hearing. At that point changes can't be made, but it will give the committee an opportunity to explain the plan and encourage discussion.

Eric said the Select Board has discussed public outreach. There will be a flier and an explanatory document to give to the public.

Deliverables/Votes

Matt moved that the draft plan as presented this evening is ready to go out for public perusal. Greg D. seconded. All approved.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be April 19. At that meeting a vote will be held on the Future Land Use chapter and the complete plan.

The committee will also discuss plans for presenting the plan to the public at the May 17 meeting.

Jessica G. asked everyone to read the Future Land Use chapter and offer their comments to Paula by April 5.

Dennis moved for adjournment; Greg D. seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Holly Rahmlow

Readfield Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Present: Bruce Hunter, Jerry Bley, Jaaron Shaw, Greg Durgin, Stephanie Donaldson, Andy Walsh

Absent: Marty Hanish, Linnea Koons

Visitors: Howard Lake, Jaaron Shaw

Meeting minutes: September 13, 2022 RCC meeting minutes approved

Old Business

Town Forest – Full payment of the town's share of revenue from tree harvesting (\$14,305) was paid. A work session to clean up slash and debris from the trails is scheduled for October 16 at 9:00 a.m. Howard L. will also see if Trail Cmte. members are interested in helping out. The clearing near the town farm was mowed about a month ago; the cellar hole foundation is now overgrown. Howard L. mentioned was the need for another section of bog bridging near MacDonald Woods (Loop A or B?).

Harold Burnett (Town Forester) anticipates that the Center Lane (trail) and road repair will be completed by the end of October, but he's not certain (stay tuned). Jerry B. will scope out the need for signage for the Town Forest trails and will order the signs as needed this winter.

KLT trail accessibility will be assessed by Enock Glidden, trail accessibility advocate for people with disabilities.

Consolidation of Recreation Bd., Conservation Comm., and Trails Cmte – RCC discussed the Selectboard's proposal to consolidate the three groups under one umbrella. Concerns included whether consolidation would be a more productive way to accomplish the goals and mission of the respective committees and if it would be the most efficient use of volunteer time. Jerry B. recommended meeting with the larger group (or individual committees) once per year. Jerry B. will draft a response to the consolidation proposal for the Selectmen.

Fairgrounds Site Visit with Select Board to Discuss Grassland Management - An informational on-site meeting to discuss grassland ecological values and management with Eric Doucette (Associate Professor, Biology, MCLA) is postponed until additional planning for the proposed ballfield is completed. Bruce H. will send a copy of the RCC's Fairgrounds mowing plan to Eric Dyer.

Doggie Bag Dispenser, Fairgrounds – RCC briefly discussed whether the new doggie bag dispenser and trash barrel would work to curb dog waste on the trails at the Fairgrounds. RCC will monitor the utility of this initiative.

Land and Water Conservation Fund for Proposed Ballfield – Jerry B. indicated that the ballfield development proposal at the Fairgrounds is a good candidate for LWC funding. The town will apply for funding in June 2023 with a decision expected late summer or early fall. If funding is available, construction would be scheduled during summer 2024. LWCF restrictions would be imposed relative to the Fairgrounds Management Plan.

Bruce H. distributed a copy of the Main Land’s most recent layout concept plan (July 15, 2022) for the proposed ballfield. RCC briefly discussed the pros/cons of the ballfield proposal and identified potential options (e.g., elementary and middle schools).

Fairy Garden on Town Property – Jerry B. talked with Megan LaChapelle about options for siting a fairy garden. RCC is recommending the Fogg Farm Property as a suitable location.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.
Submitted by Andy Walsh on November 6, 2022

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

Readfield Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 13, 2022

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

Guest: Eric Dyer (Town Manager)

Meeting minutes – The November 8, 2022 meeting minutes were approved.

New Business

Carleton Pond Conservation Easement Purchase – Jerry B. reported no updates but said that he will contact KLT to discuss; KLT may take the lead or work jointly with RCC on this task.

Old Business

Select Board Meeting re. Fairgrounds Mowing Plan – Andy W. reported that SB members' responses to RCC's mowing plan to prioritize habitat and pollinators were largely positive. There was some concern with mowing timing/frequency potentially interfering with town activities (e.g., Trunk or Treat). It was also suggested that this type of plan be carried over to other town properties with fields (old landfill, TF). SB suggested possibly having a workshop in December with the RCC, someone from Trails, and Matt Seems (person mowing the Fairgrounds) to discuss goals and implementation.

Town Forest – Final issues worked out with Harold Burnett (Town Forester). Road repairs (rutting, etc.) near the Belz Road gate were completed by Leslie Pepper.

Transfer of Draper Property to New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) will likely happen before the end of the end (2022). RCC may invite NEFF to a meeting to discuss future uses of the property. Protection of the Draper Property connects over 1,000 contiguous acres of conservation land.

RCC Budget – RCC members discussed budget needs for FY 2023-24. Among the items discussed for inclusion in the budget: no hunting signs for the Town Forest; trail signs for the Carleton property and Rosmarin Property, and a new kiosk at Torsey Pond N.P. Other items included: funds for invasive plant control on town properties (an assessment of invasive plants on the town properties will help determine needs and estimated costs) and vernal pool project (Bruce H. will finish the project this coming spring).

In an effort to soften tax impacts, Eric D. stated that any unexpended operating funds will not be carried over, but instead rolled into the General Fund. RCC's

Reserve Account will be carried over. If money in the General Fund is needed, then it can be requested via town warrant and put back in Reserve Account

Old Business

Fairgrounds Ballfield Restart – SB has a meeting scheduled for Dec. 14 to discuss how to improve the process of engaging all stakeholders for the next ballfield proposal. Jerry B. and Bruce H. will be attending the SB meeting.

A concept plan will likely be on the next warrant with funding coming from grants (LWCF, Harold Alford Foundation?) and donations (in-kind); the project will have no tax ramifications. Construction in 2024-25, with an estimated cost of \$800K. Marty H. indicated that the ballfield proposal should be part of the Comprehensive Plan and that the Town should not give the impression that the project won't cost the town money. Marty H. also suggested that Town Meeting discuss large projects like the ballfield proposal to determine whether it's needed.

Comprehensive Plan –Greg D. stated that a meeting is scheduled for December 21, 2022 to review the first few chapters of the Comp Plan (including Recreation) and that there will be multiple public meetings in January and February for input. The Comp Plan will be completed in June and on the Town Meeting warrant in June (?). Eric D. would like to find a better way for committees (Recreation, Conservation, Trails) to collaborate. Eric D. wants separation between the Comp Plan and the ballfield proposal.

Landfill Evaluation for Pollinator Habitat – RCC briefly discussed steps to evaluate the landfill soils for plants to support pollinator species. Soil sampling and testing is necessary, per consultant (Lecker). Feasibility of increasing milkweed and plant diversity (bedstraw currently dominant?) is the primary goal if the landfill is to be managed for pollinators.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.
Submitted by Andy Walsh on January 10, 2023

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

Readfield Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 14, 2023

Present: Bruce Hunter, Greg Durgin, Marty Hanish, Linnea Koons, Andy Walsh
Absent: Jerry B., Jaaron S.

Guests: Nikki Leroux and Justin Triquet, Forest Fungi Farms LLC; JustNiks Mycosilva LLC

New Business

Chaga Presentation - Nikki Leroux and Justin Triquet of JustNiks Mycosilva LLC (Forest Fungi Farms LLC) briefly re-introduced the chaga forest farming operation, product benefits, and the investment opportunity of chaga cultivation for the town. Materials available ahead of the meeting included RCC questions and answers from JustNiks, draft contract agreement, and LCC certification. Justin and Nikki took questions from RCC members regarding the proposal. Approximately 50 acres of wooded town land would be targeted for inoculation of birch species (all 3 birches are suitable: yellow, white, and gray birches). JustNiks would inoculate trees yearly to ensure payout over the years.

The chaga operation would require a Selectboard approval and a town vote.

Old Business

Fairgrounds Working Group – Greg D. and Andy W. gave an overview of the Feb. 16 meeting. Greg Leimbach presented a visioning exercise to the group that solicited a range of possible uses of the FG. The discussion ultimately focused mainly on the development of a second ballfield at the property. Sean Keegan mentioned the advantages of having two ballfields that would allow for other recreational activities, namely soccer. RCC reps Andy W. and Greg D. highlighted the natural resource and wildlife values of the existing field habitat at the FG, as well as its scenic value to users walking the trails. Andy W. also mentioned the potential interpretive and educational value of the fields for both users and local schools. Other stakeholders spoke of issues of concern: no net loss of trails (Rob Peale, Trails Cmte.); accessibility and public restrooms (Elaine Katz, Age-Friendly Cmte.), environmental habitat impacts (Marianne Perry). The need for a community center and the use of the FG as a venue for community events was discussed. Jerry B. suggested that the goal of the next meeting (March 2, 2023) is to seek consensus.

Comprehensive plan – Greg D. summarized the public meeting on Jan. 28, 2023 to discuss the CP survey. KVCOG gave a presentation and answered questions. Survey results to date indicate that quality of life is important to residents, as well as having a restaurant, store, and gas station in town. The March public meeting will discuss revisions. A warrant will be prepared for the June town meeting.

Open Space Plan – The OS plan will be completed in August and Linnea K. will be the lead for RCC. Bruce will send out sections of the Comp Plan (including open space sections) for RCC comment.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.
Submitted by Andy Walsh on March 11, 2023