

Topsham Conservation Commission

Minutes Approved 02-15-22

January 11, 2022 at 5:30 pm

Topsham Town Office and via Zoom.

In attendance: Audie Arbo, Rod Melanson (in-person at the Town Office), Shana Stewart Deeds, Victor Langelo, Steve Pelletier, Raija Suomela. Payal Gangishetti also joined us from the Times Record. Meetings open to all, please contact the Topsham Planning Office if you'd like to join us via Zoom or in person.

I. Approval of Dec 14th Minutes.

TCC edited the minutes during the meeting. Motion to approve Minutes as edited made by Steve, seconded by Victor. Minutes unanimously approved as edited.

II. Develop recommendation on use of Town conservation funds for BTLT priority project.

A. How much and from which accounts.

B. Timeline for gaining necessary approvals.

BTLT priority project packet was not received in time for the meeting. Agenda item tabled until next month. Victor will pass along the packet as soon as he receives it from Angela.

III. Forest Management Draft for Solid Waste Facility land.

TCC reviewed the draft addendum written by Steve to the 2011 Forest Management Plan at the Topsham Solid Waste Facility (TSWF). While the original Plan's primary objectives focused on recreation and wildlife, it also allowed timber harvesting. Following the most recent 2017 harvest, an increased rise of ongoing and planned recreation pressures at the TSWF has limited opportunities for timber, and to a lesser extent wildlife, management options. Consequently, TCC will confer with Pam Leduc and Ed Caron to assess the need and utility of a recreation-based management approach rather than continuing with a traditional forest management plan format.

Action items: Victor will reach out to Pam and Ed regarding the Forest Management Addendum and invite them to the next meeting to discuss.

Steve will add a stand map to the draft addendum, and add the original management plan to the TCC google drive.

Rod will add a color map to the drive.

TCC all: we should double check the draft addendum and make any final recommendations before the next meeting.

IV. Annual Plan for 2022

Tabled for next meeting.

V. Updates.

A. Shana updated the Budget, Accounts and Action items files and updated the TCC on these additions.

B. Rod provided updates from the Town

1. Rod had an initial discussion with the Town Manager regarding updating the NAP. TCC needs to go to the Selectboard to workshop the in lieu fee proposal, to update them on our activities and to let them know that we will be bringing the request to update the NAP in 2022. The Selectboard has already reviewed our draft in lieu fee proposal at a December 2021 meeting.

Action item: Victor needs to get on the Selectboard agenda.

TCC needs to write the justification for the NAP update.

TCC needs to attend the Finance committee meeting when it's relevant. Rod will inform us of the date.

2. Economic development staff members are out and the Town is down a planning staff member, plus some citizen representation has moved out of town. This makes the Topsham Community Fund (TCF) committee shorthanded.
3. Interviews are underway to replace Andrew Deci who left in mid-December.
4. Use of Coastal Community grant funds are underway in Topsham for climate solutions for stormwater management at Topsham Fair Mall. Rod will keep us up to date. Also, Topsham received a DEP 319 grant for Topsham Fair Mall management. It needs to go in front of the Selectboard so they can authorize acceptance of the funds if they wish.
5. The feasibility study grant funds for water access off Foreside field have been received. The process will start in the spring and Rod will loop in the TCC when those meetings occur. The feasibility study will consist of mapping and data collection.
6. Glenvale solar will come in front of the Planning board at their next meeting.
7. ReCode Topsham is going to the Planning Board Jan. 27, the meeting will include consultants.

C. Other

1. Raija will coordinate to order more native plants from NH like last year to add to the slope at Head of Tide Park.
2. Victor hasn't nailed down a time for the arborist, Kyle Rosenberg, to come to the recreation fields so that we can get an estimate for the work and then apply for the invasive plant grant in the spring. Victor will email Kyle again and CC Audie on this email.
3. Victor informed us that the Energy Committee will present a Town webinar about beneficial electrification. Info is on the Town website and TCC can share on Facebook. Yvette is going to the Selectboard to discuss climate action. An opportunity for public input will be available at the next Energy Committee meeting - the last T in January.
4. Raija gave us an update on CPIC, which is running through items in the 2019 plan. One of which is to make it more widely known that there is a park and ride at the Home Depot.

VI. Agenda items for future meetings.

- A. Special Area Management Program (SAMP) - relating to vernal pools update: perhaps invite Aram Calhoun (with UMaine - vernal pool ecologist) and Liz Hertz (formerly with State planning office - helped get SAMP approved) to future conversation. Relating to a project in town, in the future (if property owner is looking to other avenues of development, perhaps not with the SAMP). There is no immediacy, but perhaps we can learn from the recent consideration of SAMP use.
- B. Develop recommendations on the use of Town conservation funds for BTLT priority project
- C. Invite Pam and Ed to our next meeting to discuss the forest mgmt addendum
- D. Annual Plan 2022
- E. Revisit Comp Plan implementation matrix

Motion to adjourn made by Victor at 7:05, seconded by Steve. Meeting adjourned at 7:05pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Shana Deeds, Secretary.