

Topsham Conservation Commission

Minutes

approved at the 03-10-20 TCC meeting

February 19, 2020 at 5:30

Town Office

In attendance: Andrew Deci, Shana Stewart Deeds, Victor Langelo, Steve Pelletier, Raija Suomela

I. Approval of Dec minutes.

We did not yet have Dec. minutes or notes from our Jan. workshop to approve. Tabled until the next TCC meeting.

II. Election of President and Secretary.

Victor Langelo was elected by TCC as Chair for 2020 (it's Chair and not President, correct?)

Shana Stewart Deeds was elected by TCC as Secretary for 2020. Many thanks to Raija Suomela for her dedication and work as our previous Secretary.

TCC Members: we should perhaps add this to the TCC webpage

Shana Stewart Deeds, Secretary

Victor Langelo, Chair

Steve Pelletier

Raija Suomela

III. Introduction to new assistant planner Andrew Deci.

Many thanks to Andrew for attending our meeting, and introducing himself. Andrew brings his historic preservation and cultural history planning expertise to the table. We look forward to working with him.

IV. Review of open space requirements for new subdivision plans.

We are hoping that these match the goals set forth in the new Topsham Comprehensive Plan, and look to the Comp. Plan Implementation policies for further guidance and action.

1. Stonewall Investments lots R01-019 and R05-050

They are not proposing conservation easements, instead paying a \$6,800 in lieu fee for the first 6 lots. Nothing is sending up red flags for TCC, but we hope they are thinking about walkability and connectivity to nearby neighborhoods.

2. Others?

No.

V. Process for transferring easements in subdivision plans to Town.

Tabled until the next TCC meeting with Rod in attendance.

1. Somerset PI to Coots Ln in Glades above Homeplace.

Pedestrian easement between Somerset and Coots.

VI. Planning needed for projects in 2020 work plan

We will review our work plan at the next TCC meeting. In March and April we plan to conduct Vernal Pool checks.

Victor will be sure the letter is sent to Mallet Woods before the next meeting. We will be putting up signs soon.

We sent a letter discussing the fact that the proposed drive-through did not match the goals of the new Comp. plan.

Raija is spearheading a native plant sale to be discussed at the next meeting.

VII. Develop 2020-21 CC budget

TCC was asked to review the 2019-2020 budget and come up with the 2020-2021 budget. This will be drafted prior to the next meeting. The following are ideas for the 2020-2021 budget:

1. MEACC membership \$175
2. Purchase of educational materials.
We decided to purchase some gloves for invasive removal work days, and invasive plant guides.
3. Hire licensed herbicide applicator.
Applicators usually volunteer their time, but we should set aside funds for upcoming projects as a donation for their time.
4. Materials and refreshments for public presentations.
Perhaps an honoraria for particular speakers we wish to bring in?

VIII. Updates

1. Solar zoning.
Victor and Steve are working to craft zoning for solar as primary use. They are surprised at the number of proposals that suggest cutting existing trees to put up solar. They are suggesting that there be higher fees for tree cutting and/or impacts on more sensitive environmental sites.
2. MMT and process for conversion of rail corridor to trail.
MDOT is working on a set system to evaluate and designate existing rails by use (valuable for rail, available to transition to trails...)
3. TCC is wondering if a municipal parking lot might encourage the kind of growth goals set forth in the new Comp. Plan.
4. There is a Coldwell Banker sign up on Middlesex Road at a lot for sale, Raija reports lots of interest/activity at the site. Steve mentioned the importance of connectivity between the Cathance, Muddy and Androscoggin Rivers of which Middlesex Road may play a part.
5. BTLT is planning on a move to an ecology center at the Old Navy Base, they are in conversation with CREA about sharing office space.

Unapproved minutes respectfully submitted by Shana Stewart Deeds.