

Topsham Conservation Commission (TCC)
Meeting Minutes Approved 09/09/24
Monday, August 5, 2024 at 5:30 pm
Topsham Town Office - Meetings open to all

Attendees: Angie Brewer, Shana Stewart Deeds, Chris Dwinal, Josh Franklin (Town Planner), Issie Gale (Bowdoin Student and Topsham Summer Fellow) and Victor Langelo

I. Approve May 6, 2024 minutes and June 3, 2024 minutes.

A motion was made by Chris to approve the May minutes as written and table the June minutes until we have a quorum, which was seconded by Victor. The motion passed unanimously.

II. De-brief of Town Forest site walk and future actions and review the Town Forest visit notes.

The Topsham Conservation Commission (TCC) discussed our May walk to the Topsham Town Forest. We found no evidence of encroachment onto the property from surrounding landowners, or abuse of the property by users. We feel the property is worth maintaining for conservation value. Significant vernal pools were found containing spotted salamander egg masses. We do not recommend creating a detailed management plan or altering management at this time.

III. Update on summer intern projects.

Issie Gale, a summer fellow for Topsham from Bowdoin College, joined our meeting to present on their research for adding a pollinator park at the transfer station.

IV. Pollinator Park at Solid Waste Facility.

Issie shared a presentation on their idea for a pollinator park at the Solid Waste Facility. This presentation had recently been given to the Select Board as well. Issie worked with Ed on this project. As we can't develop the capped landfill or disturb the cap (we can only dig 6" into the soil), Issie is recommending that we seed the 9 acre capped landfill area with native, pollinator friendly plant species. They researched a seed mix that costs \$43/lb. The total cost would be \$10,500 for seed for the full 9 acres. Issie recommended seeding the area and creating some recreational paths with mowing. The area is already mowed twice a year to prevent woody shrub and tree growth that could impact the integrity of the cap. The paths would need to be mowed more frequently to maintain them. Issie mentioned the Harpswell transfer station has a project that was planted in 2017 and took three years to fully establish. Issie looked into seed mixes, and possible funding sources including the DEP Landfill closure and remediation project and Maine Bee Wellness (MEBW) that provide grants of \$500-\$3,000 for projects. Issie will email folks to determine if this kind of project might be appropriate for funding from the Maine outdoor heritage fund. Many thanks for researching this project and presenting to TCC. TCC members suggested informational signage. Issie also mentioned that we could scale the project based on funding as well, that we didn't have to do all 9 acres at once and could complete the project in phases, or we could even consider expanding the project and doing both capped landfills. Issie will share their powerpoint of information with the TCC.

V. Recode changes to solar ordinance.

After discussing the changes suggested during the ReCode efforts that recommend conditional use for solar in R3 rather than primary use, Victor will submit a comment to inquire why the changes are proposed. In general, Topsham solar seems to be limited by the need for access to three-phase power lines. TCC wants to be sure solar is able to be created in the town, but also that development in the high

value natural areas is disincentivized. ReCode Comments can be added to the ReCode Topsham Feedback [Form](#).

VI. Misc. Updates

Victor discussed a hopeful future for the Merrymeeting trail. The DOT is encouraging neighboring towns to apply for fundings for the village community partnership program.

VII. Items for upcoming meetings – meetings are the first Monday at 5:30 unless otherwise noted

- A. Don't forget to check the action items list and mark items as 'done' when completed
- B. Head of Tide and Rogers Property monitoring - coordinate with BTLT - Fall
- C. Work with BTLT to identify potential Vernal Pools where the SAMP could be used
- D. Joint meeting with Brunswick Tree Committee
- E. Potential meeting with Brunswick Climate Action Plan Committee
- F. Christine Cole tree watering schedule:
 - August – Chris is ready to water in August
 - September – Jeanne Bamforth
 - October – Shana

Motion made by Shana at 6:50 to adjourn that was seconded by Chris. Meeting adjourned at 6:51pm.

Next meeting: Monday, September 9th due to Labor Day.