

Topsham Conservation Commission (TCC)

Meeting Minutes Approved 10/02/2023

Monday Sept 11, 2023 at 5:30 pm at the Topsham Town Office.

Attendees: Audie Arbo, Angela Brewer, Shana Steward Deeds, Victor Langelo, Skye Siladi (Town Planner)

Meetings open to all.

I. Approve August Minutes

Audie made a motion to approve the minutes as written, which was seconded by Victor. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Introduction to the work of the Commission

Victor led a discussion of the mission of the TCC. Some of the work we complete includes: managing Town owned properties that have conservation value; review Town owned properties for recreation and conservation and make recommendations to the Select Board; complete site visits of the properties with conservation easements that we are required to steward; educate the community on conservation topics such as habitat preservation, RTE species, invasive removal, etc.; review conservation related ordinances, assist in the implementation of the Town Plan as it relates to conservation; coordinate discussion with the Brunswick Topsham Land Trust (BTLT) on priorities for conservation; oversee budget items related to TCC activities; report to the Select Board annually; facilitate library talks; attend ME Association of Conservation Commission (MEACC) meetings; and implement and update the Natural Areas Plan (NAP) as needed.

III. Followup from Pleasant Woods monitoring

A. Letter to residents on easement purpose and allowed uses.

B. Letter to Topsham Housing concerning broken stormwater pipe.

TCC is working on crafting this and our site visit report. We will review these at our next meeting. TCC needs to hang up the signs that were missing when we last visited.

IV. Preparation for Natural Areas Plan update

A. Public outreach on the value of Open Space.

B. Revising cost estimates.

C. Finalize RFP.

We sent a letter to the Town about why updating the NAP is important, and why we hope funds for this project will be in the budget. Preparing to put out an RFP will be the focus of our next meeting.

V. Feedback on revision to Open Space in-lieu fee calculation.

TCC has recommended to the Planning Board that the Town change the open space ordinance to be based on the number of bedrooms. TCC was provided with an update, since the Planning Board met about it. The process is ongoing.

VI. Fall Priorities

Budget, moving the NAP update forward, reporting to the Select Board, creating a flyer to educate the community about why open space is important, filling vacancies on the TCC. TCC should report soon to the Select Board as budgets are decided at the end Oct./early Nov. Derek Scrapchansky (Town Manager/Treasurer) will present the staff budget to the Select Board. The Financial Committee's presentation of the budget to the Select Board is usually in Jan./Feb.

VII. Updates

A. RUAC result and next steps.

The Transportation Commission voted 11-3 to move forward with an interim trail. The next step is a transportation commission hearing and the introduction of a bill in the next legislative session. If the trail is authorized, then gathering funding would be the next step.

B. Public site walk for "Green Infrastructure in the Topsham Fair Mall" on Aug 17th from 4:30 PM.

Stormwater treatment was discussed by the DEP. Attendance was low, but there was plenty of good information presented.

C. Christine Cole memorial Sept 10 4:00 PM at the Topsham Public Library.

Christine helped create the Tree Committee, establish the upper trail at the recreational fields with tree ID and fairy villages, and create the tree nursery at the transfer station to provide trees for the Town to use as needed. Her memorial tree at the library will be dedicated this Sunday.

VIII. Items for upcoming meetings

- A. Don't forget to check the action items list and mark items as 'done' when completed
- B. Head of Tide monitoring
- C. Work with BTLT to identify potential Vernal Pools where the SAMP could be used
- D. Meetings for the remainder of 2023 are the first Monday of the month at 5:30pm at the Town Offices or Zoom – next meeting 10/2/23

A motion was made at 7:00pm to adjourn, which was seconded by Audie Arbo. The motion passed unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary, Shana Deeds