

Topsham Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes Approved December 13, 2022

Nov 8, 2022 at 5:30 pm

Topsham Town Office and via Zoom

In attendance: Audie Arbo, Shana Stewart Deeds, Victor Langelo, Steve Pelletier and Hap Stelling. Craig Sweet consultant with Terradyn Consultants and Andy Maynard (land owner)
Meetings open to all and held at the Town Offices, please contact the Topsham Planning Office to receive a Zoom link to join us remotely.

I. Approval of Oct 11, 2022 minutes.

Victor made a motion to approve the minutes as written, which Steve seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

II. Recommendations regarding the open space proposal for [Mobile Home Park expansion plan](#).

Recreational open space suggested doesn't meet the requirements of the open space ordinance and would require the Planning Board to waive the Town ownership provisions. TCC was presented with the proposal for open space by the developer and had a chance to discuss the plan and ask questions.

The recreation proposal includes a wood chip trail of ~1400 ft and 8 car parking and benches every 200 ft marked with trail markers. They are not proposing to use the VP SAMP. The significant vernal pool will not be developed. The TCC would like to see an additional culvert under the gravel emergency access road to allow amphibian passage. The gravel emergency access and the open space area are part of phase two of development.

We discussed the need to be sure that the property will be preserved as open space in perpetuity. We recognize the need for housing in Topsham, and the desire of the community to increase affordable housing (as discussed in the comp plan).

Action Item: Victor will draft a letter to the Planning Board regarding our thoughts on this matter, and allow TCC members to respond.

III. Update of recommended landscaping trees.

Steve provided some resources for us to review on how other towns recommend landscaping trees. TCC discussed what we need to do to update the current list of recommended trees in the Topsham ordinance. We would like to remove invasive trees, such as Norway maple, from the ordinance and include a recommendation to only plant native trees. We also think that climate resilience should be considered.

Next steps - TCC will need to review the existing ordinance. TCC will need to propose revised ordinance language to remove invasives and encourage native species that can handle stress. Then we will need to workshop the proposed language changes with the Planning Board. Once we come to an agreement on language, changes will need to get onto a Town Meeting agenda. It may be easier to package these changes as part of the broader ReCode initiative.

Action Item: TCC would love to review the proposed landscape plan for Market basket and recommend that they use native plants in their development. Can Hap get that for us?

Victor will get us a link to the existing ordinance.

~~NAP update—Review RFP~~

Tabled until a future meeting.

IV. Updates

- VP SAMP - Victor presented at AVCOG (Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments) on our solar ordinance; before him was a presentation by Aram Cahoun on the VP SAMP. They are wanting to propose potential changes (simple ones) in our ordinance, likely around tweaking the formula for cost remediation. **Victor will send suggested changes prior to the next meeting so we can prep and invite them to discuss the SAMP.**
- Julie Erdman from Brunswick starts W 11/16 as assistant planner in Topsham. Although they are not trained as a planner, worked as a planner for over a decade and understand the planning process.
- MMTrails rail use advisory council is starting soon, there will be lots of opportunity for public input.
- Raija will likely back next meeting.

V. Items for upcoming meetings

1. Potential updates to Vernal Pool SAMP ordinance Dec meeting
2. NAP RFP review
3. Landscaping trees
4. FB Environmental presentation on TFMall likely in Dec
5. Head of Tide monitoring
6. Christine Cole memorial update

Motion to adjourn made by Shana at 6:56 pm and seconded by Steve. Meeting adjourned at 6:56pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary, Shana Stewart Deeds.