

## Topsham Conservation Commission

Minutes Approved 12/14/2021

November 9, 2021 at 5:30 pm

Topsham Town Office and via Zoom.

In attendance: Audie Arbo, Rod Melanson, Shana Stewart Deeds, Victor Langelo, Steve Pelletier, Raija Suomela. Meetings open to all, please contact the Topsham Planning Office if you'd like to join us.

### I. Approval of Oct 12 Minutes.

Victor moved to accept the minutes as written, motion seconded by Raija, motion unanimously approved.

### II. Discussion of funding and budget.

#### A. Add Victor's glove purchase for invasive removal to the budget. Storage location?

Victor spent about \$46, which he will add to the budget spreadsheet; they will be stored in the planning office for ease of access.

#### B. Select among Spatial Alternatives NAP update options.

TCC received options from Spatial Alternatives. TCC will review the quotes from Judy. She sent several options with scopes of work with the understanding that she was giving us quotes so that we could write a budget and define scope of work.

We are not engaging in a contract, Judy provided a framework for a bid, we will open it up to applicants if we choose to move forward. Next order of business, review the Spatial Alternatives NAP update options, propose a scope and budget, put it out to bid with RFP for work to start after funds are available July 2022.

**Action Item:** Someone (Rod or Victor) needs to follow up with Judy.

This item was discussed. The 2009 plan was completed by Judy and Hugh for \$15,000

**Action Item: TCC needs to write a purpose and needs statement that should include:**

- It has been \_ years since the last one
- Public input was demonstrated In the last town comp planning meetings
- Looking at development and see if natural areas are being protected - Angus' work this summer gave us a glimpse
- (among other reasons)

**Action Item: TCC needs to write a draft RFP**

**Action Item:** Rod can give us a heads up of when contracting out services is on the finance committee agenda, TCC should go.

III. Draft Open Space in-lieu fee policy.

A. Review account balances spreadsheet.

TCC noted that the development transfer has never been used, and neither has the vernal pool SAMP - \$0 funds

**Action Item:** Rod will look at habitat mitigation funds balance and update the spreadsheet.

B. Discussion and approval of changes to draft in-lieu fee policy.

TCC reviewed

**Action Item:** next steps workshop with selectboard **Rod can see if it can get in a Dec. or Jan. meeting, Rod will forward to the Town manager.**

Other expenditures:

We have money within habitat fee funds and we aren't authorized to spend it yet, Selectboard will need to be involved, there is already a process in law (approve or not) that goes to TCC and Parks and Rec. If the expenditure exceeds their authority then it would need to go to town meeting.

Mallet woods – funds (and interest) to manage easement, react to any issues, send out letters, contact attorney as needed, TCC makes recommendations, goes through Selectboard via policy letter

Open space – draft expenditure policy

**Action Item:** Victor will add a column to the spreadsheet giving basic descriptions of each

IV. Updates

A. MEACC review/updates – Victor and Raija attended and updated TCC on the meeting

Nice presentation on economic benefits of conservation (Jessica Sargent – Conservation Economic Consultant). Providing assessments for the monetary value of the economic services around open space could be meaningful to bolster NAP update and strengthen the conversation about open space and natural areas (economics). Victor and Raija will forward the slides for this presentation.

Perhaps TCC would like to utilize social media to ask for photos to add to the Natural Areas Plan - could be good community engagement.

B. TSWAF Forestry plan updates - **ongoing, Steve will send out when it is completed.**

C. Energy committee gave an update to the Selectboard to update the climate action plan looking into intern help and student class, Matt Nixon is supportive, not sure whether it will be funded, only so much capacity from the Planning office

D. PFAS - Audie asked if we know if any local properties had paper mill sludge. There has not been municipal sludge spread on local properties, but the transfer station did have paper mill sludge spread on it. Bowdoinham is the closest town on the high priority for PFAS testing list:

<https://www.mainepublic.org/health/2021-10-22/maine-dep-identifies-34-towns-with-high-priority-sites-pfas-chemicals-testing>

- E. Rod is stepping through the Vernal Pool SAMP on a property.
- F. **Rod provided the directions memo** with the potential recode of Topsham Fair Mall. TCC should check out: <https://www.topshammaine.com/recode>

Sept: Consultant Project Directions Memo

[https://www.topshammaine.com/vertical/Sites/%7B95A28B10-4485-4BEC-B8FC-5E8BF056A147%7D/uploads/TOP\\_Directions\\_Memo\\_2021.09.01r.pdf](https://www.topshammaine.com/vertical/Sites/%7B95A28B10-4485-4BEC-B8FC-5E8BF056A147%7D/uploads/TOP_Directions_Memo_2021.09.01r.pdf)

Embedded comp plan goals, look at open space

- G. Andrew is limited time for a few months on leave

V. Agenda items for next meeting Dec. 14, 2021

- Discussion with BTLT about upcoming priority properties.
- Update the budget expenditures (MEACC gloves)
- TSWAF Forestry plan draft will be turned in for our review
- Future – when there is something to share on ReCode

Motion to end made by Shana, seconded by Steve. TCC meeting ended at 7pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary, Shana Stewart Deeds