



Auburn, Maine

Conservation Commission

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Minutes – December 15, 2020

6:10, Zoom (Remote) Meeting

1) Roll Call: Commissioners Present: Sam Boss, Jane Costlow, Tizz Crowley, Amy Dieterich, Jordan Tate. Commissioners Absent: Rhyanna Larose and Michelle Melaragno. Guests – Dave Griswold (Community Forest Board)

2) Jane Costlow (secretary) presented minutes from meetings in October and November 2020. Amy moved to accept October minutes as presented. Jordan seconded. Passed 4 - 1 on roll call vote. Commissioner Crowley voted no.

Tizz moved to accept November minutes with suggested edits. Seconded by Sam. Unanimous by roll call vote.

3) Public Comment. None were offered.

4) Work Completed/Updates

a) Commissioners report on work completed on their identified areas of focus from the Conservation Commission Strategic Plan (please see minutes of November 17, 2020). Sam gave a review of what each Commissioner had volunteered to focus on, and invited brief reports from commissioners who had things to report.

1. Jane and Tizz reported that they had been in touch with Liz Allen on the Auburn City Staff regarding updates to the Conservation Commission webpage. They will be working with Liz to upload pictures of Auburn, and will also work on setting up links to community organizations that are relevant to conservation work. Jane will be the contact for getting information to Liz. They also suggested setting up a calendar to be accessible to Conservation Commission members, to note various conservation-related holidays, as well as upcoming and potential community events (walk in the park day, trails day, Maine State parade, for example). They also recommended the Commission keep in mind the City Budget process and potential requests for funding, including CBDG.

Action Item: regarding the logistics of using a google doc or calendar together, Amy offered that working on a document together would not be in violation of the public meeting constraint. Jane will try a dry run and see if everyone can access the google doc account.

2. Sam reported on possible speakers, including someone from the Maine Climate Council since they are eager to speak with municipal groups. Tizz suggested we keep in mind which speakers might be appropriate for public event, and also suggested inviting speakers from the community (e.g. cemetery group). Commissioners supported the idea of having speakers from a variety of groups with whom we might collaborate (people working on trails, for example, including snow mobile trails). Dave suggested another mode of outreach might be providing links on our website to relevant organizations (like Maine Woodlot Owners) that have videos. Jane noted the recent presentation by the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife; communication is a key challenge for them, too.
3. Jordan gave a quick update on Dam removal issues: she reviewed FERC materials for Hackett Mills Dam, looked at recent Auburn Dam teleconference to see who might be worth reaching out to.

b) Sam provided an update from the City Council presentation by Sabrina Best, Director of Auburn Recreation. Sabrina recently presented to Council about work on trail improvement in Auburn, particularly as more people are spending time outside. She hopes to build on that and would welcome a chance to work with the Conservation Commission. She reported that \$25,000 has been re-allocated to Mount Apatite for signage and improvements. Sam was also in touch with Rick Martel of Friends of Mount Apatite; City Council has raised a question about the impact of rock hounding on trails at Mt. Apatite. Sam asked the Commission to consider what role we might play in addressing that question: *What is the ecological impact of recreational activity? What are best practices in terms of trail building?* Tizz: is there a video of Sabrina's presentation? [AMY: yes, they're on line with City Council package] Amy clarified that the Mount Apatite funding had been re-allocated from funding for indoor recreation equipment, monies which must be spent in a timely way. Tizz and Sam noted that if we want to focus on trails, we should reach out to L-A Trails; they had been trying to bring people together from different organizations to collaborate, but that process stopped with COVID.

5) Work in Progress

a) Sam provided an overview of Ad Hoc Board and Committee Review recommendations, based on his meeting with Brian and Phil at City Hall. Sam explained that the intention is to improve communication and coordinate with other groups; the plan would also eliminate many sub-committees; for example, the Community Forest Board would shift to the Agriculture Commission. The proposal was presented in workshop in November, and City Staff are now soliciting feedback. Dave Griswold stated that given the Forest Board's constitution and its role, it is very important that it stay under the Conservation Commission. He noted that the Community Forest board deals with urban forest, not woodlot forestry, and would therefore not be a good fit for the proposed change. He also noted that Auburn has a very good working relationship with Lewiston on community forestry matters, with a 20-year history. Tizz raised a question about whether Conservation is the only commission that has

sub-committees. Sam will draft a letter of response to City Staff, and will draw on input from Dave and Tizz.

b) Amy reviewed the work she had done regarding proposed Conservation Commission ordinance changes, and explained that she had basically reorganized and refined work already done. In particular, her edited phrasing on conservation keeps much of what had been discussed, and aims to balance being broad but also clear and specific. Regarding the delegation of duties to sub-committee (e.g. Forest Board), Amy recommends speaking with City Lawyer about that particular question and more broadly she recommended waiting a month or so to see how the conversation on sub-committees (see above, 5.a) evolves. Tizz moved to approve as updated, and to give Sam authority as chair to seek clarity from City Lawyer and then to submit to City Council once sub-committee matter is resolved. Amy seconded.

In discussion, Sam moved to amend the ordinance as moved, deleting the phrase “and two (2) associate members” from Section 1. The amendment passed 4-1 on roll call, with Councilor Crowley voting no.

The motion to approve the ordinance as amended was then passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

c) Amy presented the Annual Report, which the Commission has reviewed several times previously; Amy noted updates on points E and F, and Tizz asked for clarification on when Commissioners terms had ended. Amy moved to approved; Sam seconded. The motion passed on roll call unanimously.

d) There were no proposed events and activities to discuss at this time.

e) While the Maine Climate Action Plan had been discussed earlier in the meeting, it was suggested that at a later meeting, commissioners might discuss the plan’s content and how it could impact Auburn, as well as how municipalities can be involved in implementation of plans and monitoring changes.

6) Updates on Subcommittees and Related Interests Updates

a) Parks/Cemeteries. Tizz requested that we put on the January agenda a possible “walk in the park day” to be scheduled for March.

b) Lewiston Auburn Community Forest Board. Dave Griswold noted that the Board has not met, but has requested a strategic plan update from Rick Shea. They have also reached out to Steve Murch and the city nursery about a possible grant from Project Canopy. Project Canopy grants typically announce timelines for applications in January. Sam asked whether it would be possible to have an initiative around arbor day; Dave responded that we should have time at the first of the year to do planning, given that in Maine Arbor Day happens later (third week in May).

c) Updates on relevant community partners’ work.

7) New Business and Upcoming Agenda Items

Jane noted that if we want to plan a Little Andy event for the spring, it should be on the January agenda; Tizz suggested that we consider combining a Little Andy Day with the Maine State Parade (currently scheduled for May 15, 2021)

Tizz made a motion to adjourn at 8:08. Amy seconded. Motion passed by Roll Call unanimously.

Next meeting is scheduled for January 19 at 6:00pm on zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Costlow". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the "Respectfully submitted," text.

Jane Costlow - Auburn Conservation Commission Secretary