



Auburn, Maine

Conservation Commission

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Agenda - Tuesday, January 19, 2021

6:02 pm (via Zoom)

1) Roll Call:

Commissioners Present: Sam Boss, Jane Costlow, Tizz Crowley, Rhyanna Larose, Amy Dieterich.
Commissioners Absent: Michelle Melaragno (excused).
Guests– Dave Griswold (Community Forest Board)

2) Review and approve December minutes

Tizz moved to accept the December 2020 minutes as amended; Amy seconded. Passed unanimously on roll-call vote.

3) Public Comment. There was none.

4) Work Completed/Updates.

a) Commissioners report on work completed on their identified areas of focus.

Rhyanna noted a need to finalize plans for a potential field trip during Winterfest, probably snowshoeing and tree identification at Pettingill (past experience shows that community snowshoeing events work well Saturdays at 10:00), weather permitting. Farther out, regarding a potential program around fishing on the Little Androscoggin, there are logistics to think about, but spring may not be best time for this, given the usual state of the river – late spring or summer might be better. Tizz suggested holding off till July and coordinate with Parks & Recreation.

Sam raised a question about a potential May fishing event; Rhyanna noted that Dag's Bait and Sport Goods has done various events with Tree Street and the Boys and Girls club. Commissioners expressed enthusiasm for having an event encouraging women and girls to fish – which might be coordinated with Mother's Day – but the reality of Maine weather is that a June date would be better (both because of weather and because there is a state provision for fishing on Father's Day without a license).

Sam noted that he has requested a spot for the Commission Pettingill event during Winterfest and is still waiting on confirmation from city. Commissioners agreed to promote in various ways, hoping to make sure all residents of Auburn are being served.

Jane reported that she has set up a google doc for Commissioners to share potential organizational links (for the City's Commission webpage) and calendar. There was a brief discussion of which groups to include on the list. Jane will discuss with Liz Allen whether to cross-list city offices and other committees. Commissioners made helpful suggestions re: particular local groups.

Amy had no current update, but expressed her willingness to help with other tasks, perhaps the work that Jordan had been doing on dam removal.

Tizz noted the importance of keeping an eye on longer term items for the Calendar, urged Commissioners to send ideas to Jane for keeping on the common google calendar.

Sam encouraged Commissioners to watch the recent talk from the Androscoggin Land Trust annual meeting, which can help us consider inclusivity as a priority, particularly how we can work with groups like Boys and Girls club, Tree Street, etc. He also noted that a student from Bates with GIS is working on improved maps for the Pettingill trails, which we may be able to link on our City page. He noted that he had nothing big to report on speakers' series, and has focused on local outreach, including with Sean Seary at LAWPC. There was brief discussion of communications opportunities and the potential for a list serve or newsletter to increase communication with Auburn residents.

b) Updates from Chair on Boards and Committee review; Ordinance revisions

Sam looked into the question of whether other Auburn commission have subcommittees, and it turns out only the Conservation Commission does. Commissioners discussed the question of how to respond to City staff regarding proposed restructuring, and whether we should aim to keep both subcommittees (i.e. Forest Board AND Parks/Cemetery). Rhyanna noted that the Forest Board was established long before the Conservation Commission, and is a joint committee with Lewiston. Dave stated that it's a real advantage to link the Conservation Commission and the Forest Board and that, moreover, cemeteries are often part of city forest. He also noted that the Forest Board brings funds to the city through grants, with state-level and USFS recognition. Commissioners also expressed concern that if the committees are separated they might have less authority, and wondered whether it might be possible to shift staffing of the Forest Board so that there may be up to" two conservation commissioners seated on it. Sam noted that there may be different motivations for shifting each subcommittee elsewhere, involving both collaboration with Lewiston and city management's desires for streamlining and efficiency.

c) Reports from relevant local events/talks. Sam and Jane reported briefly on a recent presentation on solar and municipalities in Maine (zoom event)

5) Work in Progress

a) Winter Fest already addressed.

b) Planning for upcoming events (e.g. Little Androscoggin River Day, Arbor Day, Earth Day National Walking Day). already addressed.

c) Recruiting new Commissioners; electing a Vice-Chair. Jordan has stepped back, Tizz will leave in June, Michelle may step back and will let Sam know. Sam encouraged commissioners to think about ways of recruiting – how could we diversify our membership and skill sets. Amy moved to accept

Jordan's resignation with regret and with deep appreciation for her years of service. The motion passed unanimously on a roll-call vote.

Sam noted that we need to elect a Vice-Chair. Sam nominates Amy, who agreed. Sam Moved to appoint Amy Dieterich as Vice-Chair; Tizz seconded. Unanimous on a roll-call vote.

6) Subcommittee/Related Interests Updates

a) Lewiston Auburn Community Forest Board. Dave reported that there is a zoom meeting set up for Thursday, when they will review the emerald ash borer grant and Arbor week plans, which includes a plan to use Auburn river walk story boards during that week. The Board is also discussing Project Canopy grant ideas, with deadlines in March; these may include planting along Washington Street near Ness Oil. May also look for grant monies to replace trees that have come out of the L-A nursery. Commissioners made recommendations on potential new members for the Forest Board.

b) Parks/Cemeteries Tizz asked the Commissioners to approve plans from Parks and Cemeteries for Take a Walk in the Park Day, which this year will be March 30 (a Tuesday). This event is a way of promoting walking in our parks. She asked commissioners to consider a place where they could sponsor a walk, with time/place info. Sam moved authorizing P/C committee to move forward with planning for National Take a Walk in the Parks Day. Rhyanna seconded. Passed unanimously on a roll-call vote.

c) Updates on relevant community partners' work. None.

7) New Business and Upcoming Agenda Items

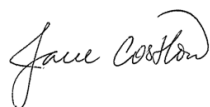
Rhyanna raised a question about logos for the Conservation Commission; she worked with Liz at City Hall, who had found no evidence suggesting that we couldn't have our own logo. Liz and Rhyanna developed three different options, but the matter has been left hanging. Rhyanna suggesting we take this up again and try to make a decision. Sam will recirculate the three logos that Liz had developed. Tizz suggests we each send Sam comments, so that we can deliberate at our February meeting. Whatever we decide still has to go to City Council.

8) Upcoming Events

Sam reminded commissioners about Peter Rubins of Grow L-A's upcoming presentation: "To Be or Not to Be: Reclassifying Muskie's Androscoggin."

Tizz moved to adjourn the meeting; Rhyanna seconded. Unanimous on roll-call vote, adjourned at 8:04.
Next Meeting: Tuesday February 16, 6:00, via zoom

Respectfully submitted,



Jane Costlow (Secretary)