

## Conservation Working Group Minutes 12/17/2024

Meeting called to order 6:05

In attendance: Sam Boss (Chair), Dave Griswold, Carol Lane, Lisa Ruccolo, Adam Platz

- Dave talked about the Ad Hoc Committee report which focused on creating a framework to determine what constitutes a bona fide farm or recreation use for Ag Zone property. The report created a framework for evaluation based on items such as: business plan, markets, financing. Site plan, parking, facilities and more. The idea is that City staff will have a clear way to make determinations based on the current ordinance. Adam suggested it is a good time for public to speak up about Ag zoning and mentioned that Auburn has the land to support the 30% land for agriculture to grow local food and 30% conserved in support of Maine's Climate Action Plan.
- Adam talked about funding for the pollinator garden project. Discussion of a sponsorship program ensued, with Adam suggested coming up with a one-page sponsorship form so that all funds donated are properly funneled through the City of Auburn. Once funds or in-kind donations are available, we can then request those resources from the City. Carol suggested a winter seed planting event in support of next year's gardens, perhaps getting dirt, hardware cloth etc donated by a local business like Petros.
- NOAA grant – Sam reported that the city is creating an RFP in two parts 1) Dam removal 2) Taylor Brook recreation development. A discussion ensued of available additional grants to do cleanup, trail work and other conservation related activities. Lisa brought forward a comprehensive list of available grants which Sam will collate and share with the group. The Food Forest came up and it was mentioned that if that was created in town (ie Pettingill) then it could most certainly be grant funded. Dave also pointed to 50/50 grants, matching programs that are available.
- Sam proposed that the group work come up with **strategic priorities** for the coming year, such as: Pollinators, dam, fish passages, building conservation interest in the city and public. Dave interjected that the Jan 9 SNRB meeting could be followed (in February?) by a meeting with all four working groups to look at the big picture of the Maine Climate Resilience Plan and how the city could advance and support that, perhaps focusing on 5 or 6 topics locally.

### Action Steps:

Lisa – looking at various available conservation related grants that might be available for 2025

All Group Members– Strategic priorities focus: everyone figure out 2 or 3 items to bring forward so we can make a work plan for the group. Some items that were talked about - Pollinators, invasives, trails, school engagement, cooperation with other conservation groups, calling a public meeting (zoom session) to invite the public to voice their conservation concerns, creating a public survey about conservation.

Meeting adjourned @ 7:30

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Lane