



Auburn, Maine
Conservation Working Group

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Minutes of meeting on May 17, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm in the Community Room in City Hall

1) Roll Call

Commissioners present: Sam Boss, Dave Griswold, Jane Costlow, Rhyanna LaRose, Amy Dieterich.

Absent: Adam Platz

Members of the public: Councilor Dana Staples, Mike Everett, Mark Beaudry, Councilor Joe Morin

2) February and March minutes will be reviewed and approved at the June meeting.

3) Public Comment

Littlefield Dam Removal and Grant Application process

Sam introduced Mark Beaudry (who lives near Littlefield Dam), who he'd met while doing a site visit. Mark explained that his family lives on Littlefield Road near the very end, that he and several neighbors had concerns about the impact of work on the dam for those living down there. Sam laid out in broad strokes what the situation is, reasons for trying to take out the dam, and the history of various efforts to deal with the dam. Councilor Morin asked about what the timetable might be for proceeding, and when the Council would need to address the issue.

The Commissioners then shifted into a broad-ranging discussion of the project, current status and how to proceed. Jane and Amy asked questions about the logistics of organizing a working group to write the grant and sort out the process of getting approval from the Council.

In response to a question from Sam about what action items we should highlight, Councilor Morin suggested the following:

what do we need for funds to do proper engineering/project assessment?

what's a reasonable cost to contract a grant writer for the process? Who might be the best grant writer, with relevant experience and understanding of the federal funding context?

Given the complexity of the project, is it worth hiring someone to manage the process for the duration (1 – 2 years?)

Councilor Morin was clear that for him, the chief goal should be to restore fish passage, with the possibility of creating a larger project with Oxford and Welchville .

Councilor Staples suggested checking in with county commissioners and/or Eric Sampson

The Councilors suggested that Council would want to see a linear plan, indicating at what point funding would be needed.

Councilor Staples stated that a resolve would be needed from Council to give city staff a go-ahead to focus their energies. There was brief discussion of the logistics of bringing the issue to Council in workshop, perhaps in early June, requesting a resolve.

Tree Street Ordinance

Councilor Staples reported briefly on the Street Tree ordinance which he and Dave Griswold have been working on, and which will come up soon in a City Council Workshop. The ordinance currently proposes a line item in the city budget that provides funds to replant any trees lost or removed, not necessarily in the same location, but somewhere in city (“Purchase, plant and maintain” in the language of proposal). The Commissioners expressed their enthusiasm for the proposal.

4) Updates & Discussion

Earth Day Clean-up

Sam reported a good turnout, with one observation that improperly discarded tires continue to be a problem. Sam suggested requesting the Sustainability group work on this. Jane suggested it might be possible to get Bates or local students to research what other communities do about the issue, what might work.

Penley Corner Road clay pit

Jane gave a brief debrief on the site visit to the proposed Penley Corner Road clay pit as well as the first SNRB meeting

5) Planning ahead/Work in Progress

John Jenkins Footbridge

The City has requested the Conservation Working Group organize a clean-up event prior to the dedication of the John Jenkins footbridge, with the probable date being June 10 (Friday).

Recruiting new Working Group members

There was brief discussion of how to identify new Working Group members; Jane suggested looking at making contacts with local organizations rather than individuals, for example the [Auburn Garden Club](#), [PAL](#), and other networks.

Royal River Land Trust Conservation

Sam pointed out the Royal River Land Trust Conservation Plan included in the meeting packet, and suggested it might be a good model for the Auburn Open Space Index. There was a brief discussion of whether there were differences between what a Land Trust like RRLT could undertake, and the work of a municipal organization. There was also brief discussion of the possibility of sponsoring a presentation to the wider community by the Land Trust about their “conservation hot spot” work.

River Walk Invasives

Dave reported on Bates’ students’ work on invasives along the River Walk. Hallowell was recently highlighted at a Tree City event as an outstanding municipality, worth finding out more about what they’re doing. Steve Merch is going to take the Invasive Species Management course. State will be supporting financial cost for foresters to get the training.

Motion to adjourn by Dave, seconded by Rhyanna. Unanimous approval. Meeting adjourned at 8:17.