Hollis Conservation Commission

January 18, 2024

Present: Joanne Toone, John Mattor, Ruth Leavitt, Doris Luther, Madison Moody,

Catherine Hewitt, Mary Hoffman, and guest Raegan Young, Special Projects and Communications Manager, from Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC).

1. Raegan led a continued discussion about open space planning, using the on-line map tool, and about how to apply options available through the community
2. Layers she has added to the map: basemap options; waterbodies; national wetland inventory; roads; town-owned parcels with Conservation Commission parcels indicated; floodplain; farmland; pitch pine barrens; wildlife data (deer wintering areas and high value plant habitat;) and stream crossings dataset (She has found a person who will send stream crossing data to her.) She’ll check on whether or not there is data for high value animal habitat. Googins Woods and Indian Cellar are on the town maps. Raegan asked if we want all publicly owned land on it. It was agreed that yes we do. Catherine will look into the town maps. State owned lands are already in the data set.

Mary brought up that the state has purchased 198 acres on Bear Hill Road. Mary will check on the status of it. We need an assessor to take a look at it.

3. Questions to look into:

-Waterboro land trust lands (included in Maine Conserved Lands Dataset)

-Utility owned lands, she’ll have to get that from the town. Utility owned land isn’t necessarily conserved land, but towns generally quasi preserve these areas. She needs to look at the assessor’s data base.

-Editable layers – edit or add to. These are called Conservation points of interest

-Snowmobile trails data from Maine Association of snowmobilers are on line but not downloadable. Hollis Honkers has trail maps available, but you have to purchase them. There is an ATV map that we might be able to use. Catherine suggested we talk to a Honker and see if they won’t charge us. Catherine will call Dan Yarumian to ask.

-John has soil maps of all of York County. Raegan said it’s difficult to digitalize them.

-Sand outwash lands are one area we could look at and include. She is confident she will be able to find data on soil.

-She was able to find the Poland Spring California Field trails.

-Saco River Buffers could also be included. She’ll research what regulations are in place. The Saco River Corridor Commission would be the source for this..

-Scenic areas/ Kettle Pond - She found data on one and wondered if there are other areas. We can include our scenic areas.

-Historic areas – she didn’t find anything specific and will further research. There aren’t always map, but they might be listed as an area. The question of whether or not to flesh out architecture interests? Helen Schaeffer’s house used to be an inn and way station for horses. Someone suggested a call to the historic society – Raegan will do that.

1. State National Guard land: John thinks it should be entirely conserved and not used as a rifle range. Raegan found a map with a point reference, but no actual location on the map. John pointed out there are blueberry fields in there and that it would be nice to have a public blueberry field. Raegan asked if we want it on the map. The answer is yes. John thinks he has maps with the parcel lines, and the town may as well. Raegan will pursue that.
2. John asked about graveyards. Raegan says they are tricky to map and a huge project. Mary thinks Butch Gannett has a list. Ruth suggested putting in the major cemeteries. The 2 major ones are on River Road, and there’s one on Plains Road. Mary will get the names to Raegan.
3. Raegan has pulled a map of the Poland Springs property. It was decided that we want to include that data.
4. Raegan then demonstrated use of the on-line map. She’ll send us a link to it.
5. Catherine asked if we were staying within the budget. Raegan will check. E-mail received from SMPDC on January 19 states: “There is no cost to the Town for SMPCD’s support as the Service Provider Grant will cover all our time and expenses.
6. Community Resilience Partnership: Sustainability and Resilience folks Abby Sherwin and Karina Graeter have gone through this process and have been successful in getting grants. There is a late March deadline for the community action grant. The community has to be enrolled in the above partnership and is only eligible for first time grant. The September timeline will be open to everyone. Someone who hasn’t gotten a grant yet will be given priority. They need 2 communities to apply. They have South Berwick and need a second. Partnership enrollment process requires a few steps – First step is to adopt a municipal resolution that we want to do this and are committed and that selectpersons are on board Assessment plans will hold community actions to help figure out what we want to do and/or have done (see handout.) Last step is to hold a public meeting You have to then do a self-assessment and submit it every 2 years to remain a member. Some state grants require that communities be a member of this partnership. If town is interested SMPDC needs a letter of commitment from the town. More than one letter is better. One from selectboard and one from HCC would be helpful. She gave us a list of community actions. We don’t have to do all of them.

The letters should go to Raegan by the end of next week. Madison will write one from HCC. Mary will write one from the Selectboard.

1. Service provider grant is due on Feb. 2 SMPDC will help communities enroll.

A public meeting can be part of another meeting. To educate and help prioritize goals.

One community got a community garden funded. Other projects include: a pilot food composting program; energy audits; helping people access funds for energy efficiency; and an electric vehicle charging station. Catherine thought we could improve culverts.

Raegan will have Abbie contact Mary about the letters.

1. Happy late birthday to John! He informed us he is passing the baton after serving on this Commission Since 2007. This will be his last meeting. He will always be available to consult and may come to a meeting now and then.

Thank you, John for all your work, wisdom, skills, and your humor!

1. Catherine tried to get bids for people to come and clean up IC. Colonial Tree said no.

Matt Wakefield from Porkchop said an 8-hour day would be $1200. she sent them a map with the locations to be cleaned. A suggestion was made that we should have them go to Googins Woods. There was consensus that we hire them. Catherine will contact him to just clear trails - nothing too involved, but more than what our volunteers are doing. She’ll have him send the bill to Madison who asked if we should go mark the trails showing what we want cut. He suggests someone go mark with surveyor tape

1. Thank you, Raegan!
2. Tea house update: We have given the Packards until spring to raise money to move it.
3. Isabell Gibson of the Eagle Scout Project still interested in having scouts do trail work.

Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Doris Luther