

Hollis Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2022

Present: John Mattor; Richard Van Langen; Madison Moody; Catherine Hewitt; Doris Luther;
Guests - Tammy Munson, Code Enforcement Officer; Jess Burton, Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative

1. Madison reported that Maine Trail Finder wants to add any trails from Hollis. John will help Madison send the GPS maps for Indian Cellar and Googins' Woods to Maine Trail Finder. If needed, Madison will walk the trails and with GPS and record it on his phone. Richard said he might already have it on GPS. He'll check and let Madison know.
2. Catherine brought the Beginning with Habitat maps showing: Undeveloped habitat blocks and connections; rare/endangered plant and animal/habitats of concern; wetlands; co-occurrence of natural resources
3. There was some discussion about cluster housing. We agreed that we don't want to see the cluster housing ordinance rescinded. If the ordinance needs to be improved, we can work on that and not throw out the whole idea. Tammy suggested we have a commission member present at the Planning Board meetings and be more active with them. She also pointed out that 95% of the new building permits have been for cluster housing. It was agreed that we should start mapping out where the cluster housing sites are located and showing how to connect the open spaces. Tammy is very willing to work with us on this.

-Tammy said the new GIS tax maps are coming out and will be available for us to see where construction in town is taking place. It was suggested that we ask Deb Stitson, Town Assessor, to see what GIS layers the town has developed and to connect with Southern Maine planning to see what it would cost for us to develop further layers to create our open space plan. Also looking to see if there are trainings in GIS.

-Catherine suggested we create a rating scale in terms of open space to indicate value; residential v. commercial; open space, etc.

-Discussion re: the definition of "open space:" Tammy said the zoning ordinance defines open space.

-Tammy clarified for us that cluster open space cannot be divided and sold off in the future.

-Tammy informed us that LD2003, statewide legislation, is coming up for vote that allows up to 3 accessory dwellings on 1 lot, so that the landowner can build more than one space for family members.

4. Catherine showed us the high value plant and animal habitat on the Beginning with

Habitat maps. Tammy would like to use these as tools to be able to identify where endangered species are, etc. Catherine pointed out the biggest parcels of undeveloped land in town, with the land between Routes 117 and 35, at about 3000 acres, being one of them. Another would be the old Army base off Route 117. She will get information on how to get these maps from the State to Tammy.

5. Jess Burton: Director of Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative which supports land and water conservation organizations with technical assistance, resources and connections to other organizations. They have worked with Conservation Commissions and land trusts, helping with strategic planning, budgets, education, and community-based projects. They can provide support to areas that are not covered by land trusts (Hollis being one of those areas.)

She asked what we are hoping to achieve – what our purpose is – what are our next steps. Catherine responded that we have, for years, been batting around the goal to create an Open Space plan for Hollis. GIS has only recently been available, and we hope to create GIS layers to keep an eye on Hollis and contiguous communities to help us develop Hollis in a smart way. Jess asked what layers we are looking at. Catherine replied: private ownership; visual ownership; environment; wetlands; plants; and animals and a rating scale. We can use the maps to overlay with maps of areas of development. Jess suggested gathering all the layers and see what is missing; decide what's important; and develop a value scale and define open space.

6. Madison received an e-mail from resident Terry Walters. He wants to speak with us in favor of cluster housing. Madison will give Terry a call.

Respectfully submitted,
Doris Luther