

Hollis Conservation Commission(HCC)
March 21, 2024

Present: John Mattor; Joanne Toone; Mary Hoffman; Madison Moody; Lee Klarman; Ruth Leavitt; Catherine Hewitt; Sarah Sorenson; Doris Luther

1. Open Space Mapping:

-Mary shared the list of town-owned property.

-Dan Yarumian will be sending the snow mobile maps to Raegan Young, Special Projects and Communications Manager, from Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC). Mary will check with Dan about the maps.

-Catherine has been gathering town owned land locations for the open space plan. She asked Raegan if we should complete an official open space plan and what would be the benefits of that. Perhaps we could go through the Community Resilience program. Raegan felt there would be more of a sense of community consensus and that we could work with the town to create something that has teeth in it, while including the wishes and priorities of the town. Catherine asked if we would want a consultant to put all this together into an open space plan. It might cost around \$20,000. Joanne would like HCC to have input on what we end up with. It was agreed that the long-range plan should be included in the open space plan. The town's Long Range Planning Committee met with different groups, but HCC has not seen the results. We need to see this before taking more steps.

2. Indian Cellar

-Madison is meeting with Isabella Gibson, Eagle Scouts, this Saturday to plan out a route for the new trail to be created as an Eagle Scouts project. Isabella has some parents and other scouts to help out. They might need our help for chainsaw type work. Part of Saturday will be to determining what kind of trail work needs to be done.

-Tree Work: Catherine reported that a lot of tree work has been done by Matt from Pork Chop Tree Company. He spent 5 hours cutting down trees and picking up downed limbs and debris. She had flagged some trees, and some local park visitors have done some work as well. She suggested that Matt could also do Googins woods. The town is paying for it. Lee suggested that we put a QR code on IC trail maps. Lee thinks he can do this from the trail map.

DOT meeting re: replacement of the Buxton-Hollis bridge on Route 202: Catherine attended and asked a few questions. They will not need to use the parking lot. They won't put a sidewalk on the bridge because there has historically not been one, and there is not a sidewalk to connect to. We agreed we want a sidewalk to get across the bridge. DOC also said there is not enough foot traffic. They used an app, but we couldn't fathom how they came to that conclusion. It seems like they need to collect that data during busy summer season. Catherine pointed out that a bridge would be connecting two parks. It seems like they should be making decisions on future needs not historical needs. Current plan is to have a 5' clearance on either side, but no sidewalk. Catherine suggested having it on the side where the kids jump off. It would make it safer. Also, they didn't know about foot traffic up to Big Daddy's. They said that if we want a sidewalk, the cost would have to be shared by Buxton and Hollis. Catherine

pointed out that a sidewalk would be cheaper than a pedestrian bridge. Hollis would entertain contributing to side walk, according to Mary We just don't know if Buxton would contribute. John thought Buxton was concerned about liability. Mary suggested that someone go to the Buxton select meeting to ask. She will call them about attending their next meeting. The landowner on the upstream side of 4A asked if they were planning to take land by eminent domain. That is not their plan. Catherine will send a letter to DOT and copy us to point out some of the points we talked about. SMPDC has a division that works with DOT, so they offered to vet the letter.

3. Town Forest Logging: Ruth looked at the tax map and the property at the sports complex. There has been some logging and maintenance, and looks like it's going to be harvested for lumber. Some big trees have been taken out. There are some nice walking/cross country skiing/ ATV trails in there. The town has a plan for logging for commercial gain. Mary will check on what the plan is. John suggested that HCC should be informed of what lands are going to be logged so we can determine if it's a special environment that may need to be preserved. Pitch pines are common in there.
4. FOREVER FARMS : Someone asked if we have any in Hollis. Doris responded that Don and Linda Marean have donated their Lindon Farm. (We think it has river frontage.) We didn't know of any others.
5. PLANNING FOR SPRING EARTH DAY at the sports complex: Earth day is on Monday, April 22, but we'll do it on Sunday, April 21 from, noon to 4. Sarah is organizing Earth Day activities. She was talking with the people at the Rec center, and they'd like to do activities for kids - like trail walks; things to plant; ice cream truck; trash pick-up (maybe have a contest for who picks up the most trash); have Corey Stearns the rabbit guy come talk about nature. Lee will create a flyer and post on facebook. Volunteers welcome! Scavenger hunt suggested by Ruth. Trash pick-up competition at 9 AM, then nature walk with Ruth and Joanne at 10:30, then activities from noon on. Sarah suggested getting a story teller. She's looking for suggestions. Lee suggested Papa Gaudet. Mary suggested the children's librarian at Hollis Center Library. Sarah suggested gift certificates to River Tap & Grill and Oak & Ember for the trash competition prizes. Mary will check with River Tap & Grill, Sarah with Oak & Ember.
6. OTHER Catherine brought up that Inland Fisheries and Wildlife bought 200 acres off Bear Hill Road to create a habitat for cotton tail rabbits. We need to ask if we can partner with them to make trails and make it accessible to public.

Back packs could be introduced at Earth Day. We need 4 packs and contents at a cost of \$120 for each one. They include books for birds, wildlife, a magnifying glass, et. al. Joanne and Sarah will make up the packs which will be available at both libraries for kids and families to use - like checking out a book. Discussion re who pays . We should use some money from regular account. If we don't use it, we'll lose it.

HCC Meeting time change: Meetings will begin at 5:45pm on the 3rd Thursday of each month.

Update on Community Resilience Project: Mary reported that the initial letter has been sent. We have been approved, and are waiting for further word.

FOR NEXT MEETING: John suggested that we talk about having a budget for hiring people (to clear trails, for example) and not take the money out of our stewardship fund.

Respectfully submitted,
Doris Luther