Hollis Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2023

Present: Lee Klarman; Catherine Hewitt; John Mattor; Madison Moody; Doris Luther; Mary Hoffman; Sarah Sorenson.

-Sarah brought Young Naturalist Backpacks she put together with information sheets on the life cycles of lots of bugs and critters. The back pack information is organized by season and contains outdoor activities that range from star gazing and clouds to tracking critters and investigating  plant, animal and earth cycles.

 They could be used by kids touring Indian Cellar or Googins Woods, etc. Very clever and very well done! HCC will be promoting the use of them. Catherine questions the benefit of the investment for access to such a very small part of the river.

-Next month guests, Hannah Bonnie and Raegan Young from Southern Maine Regional Planning will be presenting what they put together on open space planning. We can use it to help us decide what we want to do with the Open Space plan.

-John reported that the Emerald Ash Borers are rampant in Hollis and Buxton. He suggests the town budget for it and allocate funds to deal with it. They have moved across the country from Wisconsin. People can use the dead trees for firewood, but they shouldn’t move them to a new location.

-We are putting a new path in further up the road along Indian Cellar so that there will be a path that doesn’t get flooded in the spring. John took Isabella Gibson to IC, so she can work on it for her Eagle Scout project.

-Madison reminded us that we need to get sworn back in for the commission with Martha or Faith at the town office.

-The Maine Association of Conservation Commissions Annual conference will be on Saturday, October 21 at the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick.

-Tea House: Dana is working on one last ditch effort to get funding to move it. He knows we are looking to finish this up by October 1, 2023. Mark Sjulander has agreed to demolish it if we need him.

-John asked about maintenance of the parks. The town contracts for maintenance of the Town compound and has asked the Sports Complex to include maintenance and upkeep of the grounds in their budget.

-Catherine reported that the Frances Small Heritage Land Trust in Limington has acquired lots of land for the Trust.

-Catherine reported that a new boat launch to the Saco River has been constructed by Brookfield in compliance with Inland Fisheries and Game regulations, off Route 35, just north of Johnson’s Garage. It didn’t seem to her to be a very useful launch. Sarah didn’t think there was enough room for parking more than 1 boat or vehicle.

-Removal of Bar Mills dam has been delayed because of the high water in the River, reported by Mary. They won’t be doing anything with the Buxton side.

-Catherine expressed concern about Poland Springs/Blue Triton use of the aquifer to withdraw water and was wondering if there has been a significant change in the amount of water in the aquifer since it can take a significant amount of time to recharge 9according to reports it can take 100 years to refill an aquifer.

Sarah will be making a call to the US Geographical Survey staff to express the concern about the drawdown of water.

- Catherine asked if Poland Spring/Blue Triton were giving any money to the Town? Mary reported that Poland Spring/Blue Triton continues to provide some funding to the Town of Hollis. Since the change in management to Blue Triton, there is a new procedure which involves submission of paperwork and review by a Board prior to obtaining any funding. Through the years, they have been very supportive of the town providing funds for new playground equipment, update of the Town pond, a new snowblower to maintain the pond clear of snow during the winter months to allow ice hockey and skating for the public, and money for both the heat and scholarship fund for the Summer Recreation Program. Although a little more of a challenge to obtain funds, they remain very supportive of the Hollis community as a whole and are an integral part of the community.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Doris Luther